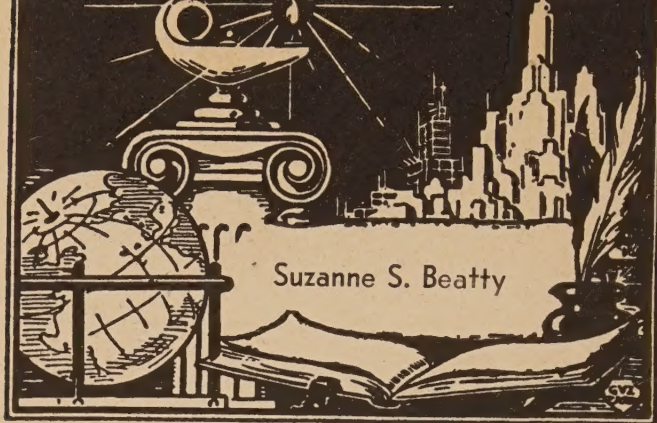


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THE BOOK OF MONELLE
MARCEL SCHWOB



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Schwob

AUTHOR

The book of Monelle

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THE BOOK OF
M O N E L L E

THE
BOOK OF MONELLE

BY
MARCEL SCHWOB

TRANSLATED BY
WILLIAM BROWN MELONEY V

WITH PREFACE BY
JOHN ERSKINE

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE TRANSLATOR

PUBLISHERS
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THE BOOK OF
M O N E L L E

P R E F A C E

PREFACE

THE *Book of Monelle* is one of those rare works which one hesitates to call a masterpiece, and yet it holds in the interest of discriminating readers a place usually accorded only to perfect things. It would be easy to say that it is a failure—that Marcel Schwob did not express in it what he had in his heart, yet the impression it continues to make, even on readers who demand of their books absolute form and clarity, is so poignant and haunting that one is at a loss to know what greater success a book could have.

The episode out of which it grew, the episode described by Mr. Meloney in his introduction, meant more to Marcel Schwob apparently than it would to most men. It is easy to see that he was primarily a bookish person, a scholar, a grammarian, an antiquarian. His familiarity with life was great, but it was of an indirect kind. His fate was to think much about experience before he had it, and to approach it with heavy prepossessions built up from his reading.

Monelle was to him a reincarnation of De Quincey's Anne, or of the street girl legend connects with Napoleon. Probably he never saw her as she was. After their too brief happiness, her death left him with memories which he could state only as poetic interpretations and sublimations. When he tried to write the record of his most real experience, the result was the allegorical fantasy which is here translated.

Reality is of many kinds. To Marcel Schwob it is intellectual and spiritual. His memory of Monelle makes upon us its poignant and haunting effect chiefly because of the pathetic desire to understand love which we feel in every sentence. Mr. Meloney finds in the book a parallel to the *Vita Nuova*. I myself am more struck by the difference between the two books. In the *Vita Nuova* Dante's search for peace is by way of immense love, completely stated. In *The Book of Monelle* the love is assumed, but it seems to me not stated at all. I find in it rather an impassioned desire, as I said, to transpose experience into some form in which it will be understandable. The book is less a record of passion and grief than a meditation on the sort of wisdom which is charity. The charity, I take it, is less for Monelle than for the writer himself—for all of us.

We are told that Monelle appealed to this bookish scholar through a certain childlike simplicity and sincerity. How much he idealized her we can

only guess, but in his record of her he tries to describe mature experience in terms of childlike innocence. If in the first section of the book, which to many readers is the most memorable, he sets down the wise sayings of this girl, it is as though he were remembering the precocious things that come from the mouths of babes. If you remind yourself that she was not altogether an innocent child I suppose the intention of Schwob's book is to challenge you with a sharp question, whether even out of a sad fate one might not emerge with a child's heart untouched. The knowledge of Monelle's way of life makes a necessary contrast to her words. If the book is not explicit in its philosophy, it is rich in philosophic questions, and in implied pleadings for all human nature. Whatever Monelle suffered or committed of shabbiness and degradation, differs only in degree with the conduct of any of us, though we may prefer to say our human weakness is different in kind. Not all of us, however, share the profound perceptions which Schwob puts into her lips.

Monelle says in one or two places that she is many things to many people. Well, that is only as we are all many-sided and full of illusions. The respectable person may be generous, selfish, courageous or mean, and still in any case respectable. Such a girl as Monelle, given to a wretched mode of living, may also be courageous or mean, spiritual or

voluptuous, generous or selfish, or she might be all of these things at once. In the second section of the book, "The Sisters of Monelle," Schwob writes a series of child allegories in which he attempts to illustrate this many-sidedness of human nature. In this part of the book, perhaps, he is the most difficult to follow. He has sublimated experience to such a degree of fancy that for the specific meaning of his fable we need a key. Yet I doubt if any one would find essential difficulty in recognizing the mood or the characteristic which each fable would record.

The third section of the book is as biographical as Schwob would permit himself, on this subject at least, to be. The coming of the girl into his life, her power over his soul, her affinity with innocence and beautiful things, the inspiration and peace she gave him, and her death at last, are portrayed still in an allegory somewhat over-subtle, but in an allegory which ought not to be difficult for the sensitive. One wonders at the end of the "Flight of Monelle," for example, whether it is his own love which ascribes to her such a questing heart, or whether she had passed through human misery urged on by wisdom so essentially spiritual. She tells him to forget her in order not to lose her; in other words, not to dwell upon the unhappiness of her loss, lest the blessed memory of their love should be spoiled. She tells him that she has found a white kingdom—that having lived through passion in this world she found

misery, but having lived through misery she has found peace. And she dies with a vision half expressed that in this white kingdom of peace something still finer might be discovered.

—Monelle, I cried, Monelle! In the White Kingdom is Monelle!

And the Kingdom appeared; but it was walled in whiteness.

Then I asked:

—And where is the key to this Kingdom?

But she who had spoken to me remained silent.

I said that the book did not seem to me a parallel to *Vita Nuova*. All possible difference between the great medieval poet and this modern man is in the last chapter of the book, which you may call cynical, if you choose, or, in another mood, profoundly beautiful and tragic. "The Resurrection of Monelle" is in the attachment the writer forms for some one else. Perhaps Monelle, then, is only his love, not the object of it, only the perpetual illusion he sets up—perhaps it is the illusion that all of us create.

And yet Mr. Meloney may be right—there may be a parallel after all to the *Vita Nuova*, for even there, as we remember, Dante found himself falling in love with another woman after Beatrice had been dead a year. And long before, Virgil, the poet whom Dante loved, told us of what terror Dido

suffered when she recognized once more in her heart the vestiges of the ancient flame. Dido hated herself for this discovery, and Dante was profoundly penitent. One must be eager to find cynicism, if one insists on finding it in the last pages of Monelle's book. I feel in every word of those pages a touching regret for the frailty and inadequacy of the human spirit, and a continued yearning for that wisdom of which Monelle was a passing glimpse.

JOHN ERSKINE.



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION*

 ONE rainy evening in the fall of 1891 Marcel Schwob, who was destined to become one of the foremost scholarly and literary figures of his times, met a frail young creature who will go down in the literature of the world as the girl Monelle. She was standing in the doorway of a shop on one of those dimly lighted streets of the *rive gauche* of Paris. In that hour the whole course and direction of Schwob's life was changed. Up until the moment when this woman entered his life he was the product of a purely intellectualized environment. Reared in the stern Jewish tradition which presupposed for him a career in either science or religion, he had lived solely in a realm of ideas and abstractions. His life had known neither gentleness nor affection; what emotions he possessed were concerned with the things of the mind. Women had played no part in his scheme of things until this

*The translator's acknowledgment and grateful appreciation for the use of much of the biographic material to be found in this introduction is offered to Pierre Champion's excellent study of the author of *Le Livre de Monelle, Marcel Schwob et Son Temps*, Paris, 1927.

peasant girl crossed his path. He tells us she was good and sweet, she knew how to be gentle and kind, and that she poured out to him the fulness and the warmth of her affection. Love such as hers was unknown to him. His learned Jewish mother had been capable of great sacrifices for her son but she was not given to idle caresses or the squandering upon him of impulsive emotion. His father had been so preoccupied with the precocity of Marcel and the promise of his talents that he had ever approached his young son with awe and misunderstanding.

Monelle was not interested in the scholar or the artist, she was concerned with the man, Marcel Schwob. She knew that he was lonely, as she was lonely. In a simple childlike way she sensed his passionate need for affection and so she went to him.

There is very little known of the story of Monelle's life or of the story of their life together. One may conjecture that she was a shop girl of very modest origin, but all that is known is that they lived together for two years, that her name was Louise and that Marcel Schwob called her Monelle. When she died, out of the grief and the pain of his loss he wrote of her *Le Livre de Monelle* which was immediately acclaimed by many of the critics of that day as one of the literary treasures of the world. Anatole France wrote to him: "I do not know of anything more beautiful than Monelle. With the deep

understanding and the exact precision of the artist you have expressed in this book sadness and sweetness and the infinite of profound thought. I admire you and I love you."

In the thirty-four years which have passed since the writing of *Le Livre de Monelle* scholars, philosophers and lovers of the beautiful in literature have treasured this book as one of the rare moments of creative writing in the history of civilized and sophisticated thought. Yet no two readers of this book have agreed in their interpretations of its meaning. Like the Saint Gaudens' Memorial for Mrs. Adams this book expresses the varying experiences and emotions of those who come to it. Some French puritans, while admitting its rare beauty, are mystified by certain aspects of Schwob's philosophy, while others protest that despite the intrinsic merits of *The Book of Monelle* it is not typical of the French tradition in literature. Nor are their protests unfounded. This book is unique, it is timeless, and in common with a small body of fine literature it represents no nation's literary tradition.

To understand better the meaning of *The Book of Monelle* it is first necessary to examine the life and education of Marcel Schwob.

Not the least of the literary contributions that he left is his *Essay on Biography* which he reprinted as a preface to his volume *Les Vies Imaginaires*. In this he phrased the art of biographic writing. Before

recounting the story of Marcel Schwob's career it is pertinent to consider his views on those events in a man's life which determine the course he will take and the work he will do.

He writes: "History leaves us in doubt as to individuals, revealing to us only the incidents by which they were attached to general actions. History tells us that Napoleon suffered and was ill the day of Waterloo; that it is necessary to attribute the excessive intellectual activity of Newton to the absolute continence of his temperament; that Alexander was drunk when he killed Clitus and that the fistula of Louis XIV was perhaps the cause of certain of his resolutions. Pascal reasoned the possible changes in history which might have been occasioned had Cleopatra's nose been a mite shorter, had there not been a grain of sand in Cromwell's urethra. But all these facts are of value only because they modified or changed a series of events. They are the causes, real or possible, and we must leave them to savants.

"Art as opposed to history describes only the individual, desires only the unique. It does not classify; it unclassifies. No matter how much generalities occupy our minds they must be likened to processes of thought pursued on the planet Mars and three lines drawn between them might form a triangle enclosing all the points of the universe. But regard the leaf of a tree with its complex nervous system, its multitude of tints varied by shade and light, the

imprint left by a rain drop, the tiny hole left by an insect, the silver trail of a snail across its surface or the first mortal blush of autumn gold. Search through all the forests of the earth another leaf exactly like this and I defy you to bring me one. There is no science of the teguments of a leaf, for the intricate variations of cell structure, the path of a vein or for the mania of a habit or the convolutions of character. That a man's nose is broken, one eye higher than the other; that he possesses a twisted gnarled arm; that he habitually eats the white meat of chicken at a certain hour of the day; that he prefers Malvoisie to Château-Margaux; these are things unparalleled in all the world. Thales might have said ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ as well as Socrates but he would never have rubbed his leg in exactly the same fashion before drinking his hemlock cup. The ideas of great men are the common patrimony of humanity but in reality great men possess only that which is unique and bizarre within them. The book which would describe a man in all his anomalies should be a work of art as a Japanese print where one sees engraved the image of a caterpillar seen once at one particular hour of the day."

This is the theme of Schwob's *Les Vies Imaginaires*. He is interested, vitally interested, in the fact that Aristophanes was bald; that the curious nose of Socrates had been remarked by his contemporaries; that Aristotle collected terra cotta vases; that Mil-

ton "pronounced the letter R very hard"; that Spenser wore his hair short; that Erasmus did not care for fish; that Doctor Johnson collected orange peels and carried them about in his pocket. To him these are matters of the utmost importance in the art of biography. Aubrey and Wood practised this discrimination without seeming to understand what they did. The painter Hokusai made this the tenet of his art. Schwob joined arms with Aubrey and Hokusai and marched gaily off to write some Imaginary Lives. Erostrat, Crates, Lucretius, Clodia, Paolo Uccello, Captain Kidd and Major Stede Bonnet are some of the many that come to life in the pages of this book. When you have finished reading of them you feel that you know them better than the friend you talked with yesterday.

He felt that in the life of every man there has occurred some moment in early childhood when his individuality was expressed, when for the first time he had shown himself to be unlike, in at least one single respect, to all other living things.

* * * * *

In Nantes in Brittany on a summer afternoon of 1873 a little boy and girl crossed the garden of their home to the base of a plane-tree. The boy quickly mounted to the lower branches and there established, feet braced against the trunk the better to secure his perch, he hung far down to grasp the books which the girl held toward him. The boy was André-

Mayer Marcel Schwob, the little girl, his sister Maggy, and the books she gave him were perhaps the wondrous tales of faerie of the brothers Grimm or those strange fantasies of Edgar Allan Poe or the *Account of a Voyage Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* by his favorite French author, Jules Verne, and again instead of any one of these it is likely, knowing the propensity and the hunger of this child's reading, that Maggy bore aloft that afternoon all three of these favorite volumes.

The antecedents, the birth, the education of Marcel Schwob are not difficult to uncover and, while of no less importance, are interesting only in that they express and make more understandable the life of a child we have found in a Nantes garden in the summer of 1873.

His mother, Mathilde Cahun (Caym) was a descendant of the Caym Champenois who bore a coat of arms and a blazon on their shield dating from the eleventh century when Caym de Sainte-Menehould fought beside Saint Louis. This mother was stern, rigid she has been called, and we are told that Marcel Schwob loved her with a tenderness which was shadowed by fear. Yet it would seem in retrospect that the hard unbending will with which she molded the life of this son came only from a deep love and a passionate desire to aid him in the achievement of those things for the accomplishment of which she believed him endowed with special gifts. Of him

she would have nothing short of perfection, by him she would have nothing short of greatness.

Descended from a family of rabbis and doctors, Mathilde Cahun must have dreamed one of these careers for her son. When early in childhood he displayed a definite aversion to the creed of his fathers and neither taste nor inclination for a career of science she could not but have known great disappointment. However, there remained an alternative not unpleasing to this woman of the Cayms. Marcel Schwob in his early youth felt a deep yearning to be a teacher; to him this was an avocation rather than a career, to his mother it was but another name for priesthood and she was pleased. With the deep learning and finely balanced education which was her heritage she undertook the early training of her son. If in later years he remembered her as a stern and hard taskmaster and regretted that his childhood had not known the outward manifestations of tenderness and mother-love normal to children, he never failed to realize the benefits he had received from her training. "My misfortune," he once said, "is to have been born a child of the Cahuns, but it is because of that that I am not an imbecile."

Isaac Georges Schwob, the father of Marcel, was a humanist. He had been a disciple of Gustave Flaubert and joined himself to that literary circle which numbered Théodore de Banville and Théophile Gautier. As a journalist he had contributed

to Baudelaire's *Corsaire Satan*, and with Jules Verne collaborated in the writing of a play which, despite Verne's popularity, was a miserable failure. Financial troubles and failing health made Georges Schwob despair of a literary career. After a brief adventure as *inspecteur d'assurances* his health made a change of climate seem necessary. He went to Egypt where for ten years he served in the important position of Secretary of the Egyptian Institute, head of the Cabinet of the Cherif Pacha and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Khedive. Shortly after the return of the family from Egypt and while they were temporarily settled in Chaville, Seine-et-Oise, Marcel Schwob was born, the twenty-third of August, 1867.

It is not known at what age his education began. It is known only that at the age of three he spoke and read his native language,—French,—German and English. One is reminded of the English child, John Stuart Mill, who at the same age had begun his studies in Greek. Marcel Schwob's early education seems to have been entirely under the direction of Mathilde Cahun; and it would seem that her hopes and ambitions for this child gave promise of realization, for despite the family's very limited resources and at great privation to all of them she procured for her son an English governess and a German tutor. It was this governess and this tutor from whom he escaped that summer afternoon in 1873 to read his books in a treetop.

Sometime between the ages of three and ten he was instructed in Latin and Greek, for in the first record of his formal education, a report dated from Nantes in 1879, it is written that to Marcel Schwob was given the prize of general excellence, the first prize in Latin translation and composition, the first prize in Greek exercises, the first prize in the French language, the first prize in calculus and in English.

His childhood was not a normal one, his education was unusual, almost unique. Yet withal this child of twelve, who gave the true promise of a great scholar at twenty, was not unpleasantly precocious. A child who read Mark Twain, Grimm, Jules Verne, and Poe, is still within the ken of human understanding.

At fifteen he was sent by his family to Paris for his higher schooling. There he lived with his uncle, Léon Cahun, and attended the college *Sainte Barbe* in the *Lycée Louis le Grand*.

It is not difficult to picture Schwob as a boy when he came to Paris. He was a small child, he was not a large man, but few people ever looked long upon his stature once they had seen his burning eyes and the pale thin eagerness of his face, where sensuality and asceticism fought for dominance.

The massive buildings of the ancient College of the Four Nations line the left bank of the Seine halfway between the gardens of the *Beaux Arts* and the green prow of the *Ile de la Cité*. Their grayed

stones, their deep shadows, the mystery and the dream of them, their glorious and graceful Old-World waste of space say for us all that we feel but can never phrase about Paris. The ancient College of the Four Nations to-day houses the *Institute*, and the tall windows to the right of the entrance way, looking out over the river, across to the Louvre and thence out over the city, were once the apartments of Léon Cahun. Those who have wandered into the first court of these buildings will remember the faded gilt lettering on the walls with the legend *Bibliothèque Mazarin*, and if they have been of an observant frame of mind they will have noted the curious absence of that ill-used motto: *Liberté-Egalité-Fraternité*. This seems to have been the only public wall in Paris upon which those men of the Revolution failed to daub their battle-cry. And perhaps they had reason, for here reigns a Liberty, an Equality, a Fraternity of which they could have no understanding. Here resides the Democracy of the intellect with all its concomitant snobbery and autocracy. Of this library Léon Cahun was the head Curator and Chief Librarian; here it was that at fifteen Marcel Schwob came to live.

On late afternoons all those months of the year save the summer, the streets in Paris are filled with the shrill cries of schoolboys on their way home or on their way to the parks or gardens to play their games. Uniformed in their oddly vizored *Lycée*

caps, trousered in the garb of men, they are curiously and very like all children. As children the world over, in healthy and rough exercise, they exhaust the ennui of those hours they have spent upon school benches. Yet Marcel Schwob was different and he had good reason to be; he loved books and one of the famous libraries of the world had become his home.

It is pleasant to picture him at fifteen just after the last bell of the day at the *Lycée Louis le Grand* pushing his way through the bustle and trudging off down the *rue Montaigne Sainte Genéviève*, and it is certain that as he walked his mind played with the romance which is the heritage of this street. Here Abelard walked and with him the small group of scholars who were to form the nuclei of the University of Paris. Here walked Erasmus, John Scotus, Peter of Spain. Here Dante is said to have been. On the very site of the *Lycée Louis le Grand* once stood the famous College of Navarre where François Villon studied, and where one dark night in 1456 he forsook his lyric muse to turn thief and empty the coffers of his Mother College. These were the toys and playthings of the child Marcel Schwob as he walked down the *rue Montaigne Sainte Genéviève*; a turn and then down the *rue de Seine* until he came to the rear entrance of the *Institute*. A series of courts, a flight of stairs and he was sitting at the desk of Léon Cahun in the *Bibliothèque Mazarin*.

This book-filled room was to Marcel Schwob what a playroom might have been to other children. Here were his friends, his work things, his only playthings; and what playthings they were! Should he choose he might look upon that first printed book in history, the famous Mazarin Bible, from the press of Gutenberg. Or he might read manuscripts in Latin or Greek or medieval French, or again he might have brought to him almost any book he could think or dream of, and the more curious or the more rare his taste the surer it would be satisfied, for such is the boast of the *Bibliothèque Mazarin*. So great was his aptitude with the materials which were at once his life and his work that at sixteen he was prepared to collate the five dialogues of Lucian to be found among the Greek manuscripts of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. And in the same year, 1883, he commenced a translation of Catullus into the sixteenth-century French of Clement Marot. It is these two mature works, commenced in his childhood, that give the promise of the great humanism upon which the fame of Marcel Schwob was to be founded.

At the time of these adventures in classical scholarship Marcel Schwob began collecting material and antiquarian notes upon the life and social conditions of ancient Rome. He was particularly interested in the every-day sort of people who walked the streets, and from his omnivorous reading of the ancient authors he gleaned a multitude of notes upon

the Roman tavern life, the circus, fêtes and the pagan religions. Unconsciously mastering the classics, he buried himself in this research until he was intimate with the life he studied. It was as if this youth of sixteen had forsaken his Paris and projected his life back two thousand years to the Rome of the Cæsars, for of Rome, it would seem, he knew more than of his own city. In Paris he was but a young student at the *Lycée Louis le Grand*, in Rome he was a mature scholar; in the one he followed sturdy leaders along well-beaten roads, while in the other he broke his own paths and each discovery, large or small, was a victory.

Beggars, lepers, prostitutes, thieves, princes, courtesans and courtesanes, slaves and their masters, the humble poor and the grievous passed before him and were known to him, this youth of sixteen. He talked to the venders selling fruit and trinkets along the streets, he idled before scriptoriums and there read a verse or two from the latest poet of fashion as the many leaves of vellum manuscript fluttered in the wind. He wandered in the great market-places where the poor begged bread while the stewards of the rich purchased humming-birds' tongues and peacocks' eyes. He ate a meager supper of bread and cheese in some low tavern of the city or shared a stew with the fisher people in the shadows along the river. Again he was guest to the board of Petronius, there

to be gorged as each succeeding dish surpassed in rarity and cost the wildest dreams of this voluptuous company. Marcel Schwob was writing the novel of *Poupa, A Roman Woman*.

The novel *Poupa* was never finished; there remain of it only a few fragments. But fragments though they be they are of such charming delicacy, of such promise as ever to be considered remarks to his more mature work.

The material he collected, the understanding of a lost civilization he gained were not wasted; there are gleanings of this study to be perceived throughout all his writing, in the *Cœur Double*, *Le Roi au Masque d'Or*, *Les Vies Imaginaires*.

To Marcel Schwob, who at the age of six felt cramped in the barren and narrow provincial life of Nantes, who in later life could never think of his childhood home with pleasure and remembered his days there solely by the excellence of his education which his family had made possible to him, Paris was become some dreamed-of land of faerie; like so many of his countrymen he would have been a child of Paris had he been born in Timbuctoo. To this child's dream of Paris Léon Cahun was a glamorous, adventurous complement. Léon Cahun knew life and he knew men and he was one of the great scholars of his time. Did Marcel Schwob wish to translate Catullus or edit Lucian, here then was a

guide, an enthusiast and a critic to help him on his way. Did the young student wish to turn anthropologist and antiquarian, here was a humanist left over from the *Moyen Age* who out of the rich store-house of his knowledge could open whole realms of romance. One can trace the formal schooling of Marcel Schwob, note his excellence and list his many prizes, but one has just begun, for he was not educated at a school form. He was tutored at his mother's knee and there, by her sacrifice, grounded in his languages and the classics. His education, however, came from the desk he shared with Léon Cahun, from the brilliant conversation he was partner to in their rambles together far afield from the usual matter to be found in a student's daily text.

In 1885 Marcel Schwob left the *Lycée Louis le Grand* for his two years of military service. He was assigned to the Thirty-fifth Regiment of Artillery at Vannes, a regiment chosen by his father because of its reputation for rigid discipline. There will ever be a mystery bound up in these two years of his career. It is not difficult to reconstruct the army life of that time, but it is difficult to picture Marcel Schwob in such an environment. The nakedness, the stark democracy of it all, the crudity, the miscellaneous hodge-podge of humanity were all alien to his nature. Of those two years there is little known and that little is in the manner of deduction. Letters he wrote to his family and friends, but they offer no

enlightenment to his biographers. From him there is only the most meager information, the incidents and the superficial account of his days. There are writings of his later life which seem to reflect this period of his youth. In the *Cœur Double* are to be found some of these. There is, however, one piece of writing through which one may look deep into his heart. It is the *Lanterne Rouge* which by its very first line is dedicated *to his brothers in argot*. Here we find a fantastic parade of thieves, girls of the street, the keeper of the house, old men who pick up cigarette stubs before café tables, corpses, filth, horror, atrocity, obscenity, all these and more, and we find them cloaked in the eternal language of the streets, in words whose very origins were forgotten in the Middle Ages when this language was old.

Such is the *Lanterne Rouge*. The germ of it came from Villon, it was born in a Paris bordel house in the wild years of a dark century. The story is old but it is as new to-day as it was in the thirteenth or the fifteenth century. It became vivid and vital in the light of the life Marcel Schwob saw during his period of military service. With the plaintive note that we have as an undertone in Villon he cries out to his *brothers in argot*, and the refrain comes as a query asking how so beautiful, so wonderful and so glorious a thing as life can become so tawdry, so ugly, so unclean. This and no more do we know of his life during the years of 1885 and 1886.

For a short time after he returned to the *Lycée Louis le Grand*, he played the *enfant terrible*. Léon Daudet writes of him during these years in his volume, *Fantômes et Vivants*: "He was already the scholar and disdainful of any restrictions of program. To the detriment of his immediate success he was for ever going off on some tangent of thought. In his quality of Jewish polyglot he spoke English and German perfectly and read Emanuel Kant in the original." In two years he finished his course in the *Lycée* and presented himself as a candidate for admittance to the *École Normale*. Why he was rejected by the *École Normale* is a question which will probably never be answered. Certainly his rejection had nothing to do with scholarship, for his scholastic attainments were of such magnitude as to warrant his name being put on the rolls of any college. Perhaps it was that the *École Normale* being a specialized school for the training and preparation of teachers decided that despite his scholarship he was neither a type nor an individual suited for a pedagogical career. But this is only a conjecture.

Mathilde Cahun, who saw in this setback the destruction of her ambitions for her son, urged him to try again for admittance, and in the meantime attempted to find a secretary's position for him with the Rothschild interests.

But he seems to have been little interested in

any connection with the Rothschild family for nothing came of his mother's suggestion. While not openly changing his plans it would appear that he had lost all interest in the *École Normale*, and in the time that he might have spent preparing for his examinations there he haunted the halls of the *Sorbonne* and followed the philosophy lectures of Boutroux. He completely lost himself in his studies on Descartes and Spinoza. But the revenge he dreamed of for the slight he had suffered was not many months away.

In 1888 he received his *licence de lettres*, the first in standing of the fourteen accepted out of one hundred candidates who had for two years been students at the *École Normale*. This must have been sweet vindication for Marcel Schwob, for he clearly showed the *École Normale* that they had refused admittance to the highest student of the year.

Celebrating his victory he had engraved upon his visiting cards: *Marcel Schwob, Licencié*; and the next year removed from the *Bibliothèque Mazarin* and the home of Léon Cahun to lodgings on the *rue de l'Université*. Here to all intents and purposes he worked upon the preparation of his *agrégation* and in his spare time occupied himself with small remunerative work. Such, at least, was the understanding of his family as they dreamed of their son and the professor he would some day become. The truth of the matter, however, is that he did all man-

ner of things. He accomplished an immense amount of research upon subjects which interested him but which were scarcely pertinent to his examination for the *agrégation*. He read, he wrote, and for a while he taught in the *Société Scientifique et Littéraire des Instituteurs de France*. In the time not occupied by these pursuits he may have devoted himself to the task of preparing his examination. But how could a person such as Marcel Schwob be bothered by relatively unimportant studies when he was in the midst of reading Walt Whitman, Poe, Mark Twain, Stevenson, Shakespeare and François Villon? Pierre Champion writes that he read *Hamlet* and Pascal at the same time.

Throughout his schoolhood there was one friendship which touched his life more deeply than any other human relationship of those years. He met Georges Guieysse during his first year at the *Lycée*; friendship followed companionship, and love followed friendship in an attachment which promised to last throughout their years. In 1888 he and Guieysse commenced a study of the *Argot Français* of the Middle Ages. The work they produced was of profound and scholarly erudition and is looked upon to-day as a permanent contribution to the science of philology. One of the professors of the Sorbonne in criticizing this work wrote: "These two young men . . . with high principles of scholarship have brought light upon a field of study which

until their advent was distinguished primarily by vagueness and fantasy." This was the self-conceived task of two boys not yet out of the *Lycée Louis le Grand*.

In May of 1889 Georges Guieysse went to Monsieur Burdeau, his professor of philosophy, and after a very disquieting talk was advised to go home to his parents for several days. Guieysse had confessed to a deep depression and a feeling of hopelessness about life. Two days later Georges Guieysse died, a suicide.

A less vigorous mind had floundered and been destroyed by the reading of philosophers whom Marcel Schwob had encompassed at the age of twelve. Following the fragmentary translation he had begun of Kant at that age, he wrote an essay on philosophy in which he offered the analogy that philosophy was like looking at life through a telescope. The Germans, he said, inverted the glass and only saw life in its infinitesimal proportions.

Their book was in press at the time and when it appeared under the joint names it carried a preface by Schwob, a eulogy and an expression of his grief. "We had dreamed," he wrote, "of working into the future together upon these studies which were so near to our hearts."

The death of Georges Guieysse was the first deep emotional crisis in the life of Marcel Schwob. Until this time he was a boy bearing a mature mind.

He now became a man. What he had begun with his friend he carried on alone.

Perhaps the one great intellectual passion in his life was his study of François Villon. At fifteen he had known this poet by heart. At twenty-one he had produced a study on the *Argot Français* of the Middle Ages. At twenty-two he began to haunt the *Archives Nationales*, working in that dingy but glorious room with the great medieval scholar, Auguste Longnon, working over the same material with him. It was this year, 1890, that he was asked to read a paper upon his Villon findings before the *Institute de France*.

He had come upon a strange document of a legal instrument of the fifteenth century dated in Dijon in 1456. This paper was the confession of a certain barber, Fouquet, of that town who, in his capacity of surgeon, had come into contact with a band of criminals, the Coquillards, whose organization spread over all France and extended into Germany and Italy. Of such magnitude was this band that they had devised for their better protection a secret language in which they talked and wrote. When the king's military intervened, Fouquet was one of the first apprehended and in his confession he put down almost a hundred words of the Coquillards' argot and their equivalent French meaning, words that he had casually heard in his intercourse with this band. This confession led to the arrest and execu-

tion of some thirty men in Dijon alone. Among the names that the Dijon manuscript mentions as having been executed as members of this society were two friends of Villon and at least three persons mentioned in his verse. All this would have been merely interesting biographical material were it not that Villon wrote a series of ballads in *Jargon et Jobelin* and that the jargon used was curiously enough the argot of the Society of the Coquillards. From this Schwob drew the very obvious conclusion that Villon had been a member of, or at least associated with, this band, and then proceeded to translate with the aid of the list of words given by Fouquet the, until then, unintelligible verses of François Villon. Before one of the most severe bodies of critics in the world, before jealous gray-haired scholars he rose, scarcely more than a boy in that assembly, to read his paper, *Le Jargon des Coquillards*, one of the most remarkable and scholarly discoveries, one of the most astute and soundly erudite contributions of these times to medieval study.

A few months following this youthful triumph he rose before the *Académie des Inscriptions* to disclose even further discoveries in the Villon field. At this time he uncovered the legend of the *Pet au Diable* and offered the very tenable theory that Villon antedated his known writing by a satirical burlesque of the old romances.

When Marcel Schwob took lodgings on the *rue*

de l'Université and left the *Bibliothèque Mazarin* and his uncle Léon Cahun, he seems to have completely discarded the idea of taking his *agrégation*. A few months after this change of purpose he made his début in the field of journalism with some contributions to *l'Évènement*. His friends were shocked, his family scandalized, but all their objections availed little against his determination. His dedication of one of his earliest stories to Anatole France openly declares the school of writers with which he wished to associate himself. Immediately he attracted notice and commanded a considerable reading public.

It would seem that at first his family were but little disquieted and looked upon this venture of their son as merely an evil necessary to earn the money with which to complete his education. But soon they became uneasy and the suspicion was more firmly grounded, and especially in the heart of Mathilde Cahun, that the life of her son was no longer theirs to direct and mold. In resignation they forgot their dreams of a university career and began to take just pride in his purely literary writings.

After a year with *l'Évènement* his writings began to appear in the *Echo de Paris* and that journal printed the stories which were later to be published in book form under the titles: *Le Cœur Double* and *Le Roi au Masque D'Or*. But despite the surprising

success, despite the tempting offers the future held for his writings in this vein, he never forsook his more serious pursuits and studies. While the great book of his life, the biography of François Villon that he planned to write, was cut short by his death, the mass of pure scholarly work that he produced during these years was in itself sufficient to win him fame and memory.

His father lived to see his son heralded as the coming great literary figure of his country, long enough to see Anatole France publish a eulogy of his son and to read from the pen of the dean of French letters that:

“Marcel Schwob’s preface to the *Cœur Double* pleases me because he speaks of Euripides and Shakespeare and because the whole of it breathes a fervent love of letters. . . .

“He promises the reader terror and pity. He has made me know pity and feel terror. Marcel Schwob is the master of evoking the fantoms of fear and of making his readers shudder with a new sensation. . . . Like Ulysses one may say that Marcel Schwob is subtle and knowing in the diverse customs of men. One finds in his stories a tableau of all time, from the stone age to the present day. And through all one finds in Marcel Schwob a special taste, a predilection for simple beings, heroes or criminals, through whose medium ideas are projected without nuance in their most crude and vivid tones.”

Georges Isaac Schwob lived just long enough to hold lovingly in his hands volumes of the *Cœur Double* and *Le Roi au Masque D'Or*.

It was at this time that fate led Marcel Schwob out into the rain and into the life of the girl Louise whom we know as Monelle. His friends did not know Monelle; to only a few did he even speak of her. In the first months of his life with her he said to Jules Renard: "I feared the brutality of women. I have for my mistress a little creature. She is gentle and kind."

Fleeing from the world, they created about themselves, and lived in, a fanciful realm of unreality where they reduced all the events of their world to the simplicity of a child's understanding. Together they played with the children who for ever cluster about the gardens of the Luxembourg. Schwob too busy with books, Monelle too busy with work, to play in their own childhood, they now turned back to recapture those precious moments when the course of a sail-boat across a mirrored pool assumed a greater significance and importance than the destiny of the world or to-morrow's dinner. Nor were they content to leave these wondrous and new-found playthings when they left their rambles in the Luxembourg to return to their rooms, but they carried the illusion into the most commonplace events of their every-day life. They wrote each other childish little notes in which they talked of the children of the

neighborhood, the dolls Monelle was making for them and the little doll's clothing she sewed on at night when her more serious needlework of the day was done.

"I do not know when Monelle took me by the hand," he writes in *Le Livre de Monelle*. "I think that it was an autumn evening when the rain was already cold.

" 'Come play with us,' she said.

" 'Come play,' she said. 'We will work no more, we will only play.' "

The details of Marcel Schwob's life with Monelle are shrouded in mystery. We know more of her death than of her life. The miserable conditions in which she had lived and the cheap clothing which could not protect her against the damp cold of Paris winters sapped her strength. She suffered a prolonged cold and then came the doctor of Jules Renard and spoke the word *tuberculosis*. On the seventh of December of 1893 Jules Renard writes that he had purchased a box of grapes and oranges to take to the sick girl. In the intimacy of his diary he notes: "What joy she will have! Coming from me, his dearest friend, they will be golden fruit to her." He mounted the stairway and softly opened the door. Marcel Schwob came to him in the agony of grief; Monelle, his love, had that moment died. His loss devastated him. It was less the departure of a lover; it was as if he had lost an only child.

For months he was as a man lost in life. He could think only, speak only of Monelle. Anatole France, Byvanck and the Daudets tried to console him and help him. Slowly he withdrew himself from even the society of those dearest to his heart. He destroyed everything which might remind him of Monelle, the letters they had written, such of her intimate possessions as remained to him, then he commenced to write *Le Livre de Monelle*, that, by giving expression to his sorrow, he might destroy not only sorrow but his memory as well.

"I give you the word: Destroy! Destroy! Destroy! Destroy within yourself and destroy all that which lies about you. Make place in the world for your soul and for the souls of others. . . .

"Sedulously burn the dead, and let their ashes float away upon the four winds of heaven.

"Sedulously burn all actions that live in the past, and obliterate their ashes . . .

"Do not mock the dead, nor even kiss their faces. Neither laugh at them nor cry over them; forget them."

* * * * *

He wrote of Monelle as the very consummation of love; out of the pain of his loss he fashioned from their life together a poem in prose. Marcel Schwob never wrote a *Divine Comedy* but he equals, if indeed he does not exceed, the sublime majesty of a

Vita Nuova for *Le Livre de Monelle* was the *Vita Nuova* of his life.

He had been deeply touched by the story De Quincey tells in the *English Opium Eater* of the gentle Anne, and the legend of the little girl Napoleon met one evening under the iron gates of the *Palais Royale*; through his life with Monelle these stories assumed a new and deeper meaning for him. These women were prostitutes but for at least one moment in their lives they showed themselves capable of deep compassion, of great gentleness and transcendent purity. When he comes to write *Le Livre de Monelle* he speaks in parable; he says that Monelle is the essence of goodness in all woman, that she is this woman and that woman and last of all that she is none other than one of *these little women of pleasure*. She was all that is good, compassionate, gentle and kind. She is one of those who have "come through the cold and the rain to kiss your brow, to brush their lips across your eyes, to drive from you the terror and the sadness that you know. . . . When they have done perhaps they must go to others who have need of them.

"You only know them while they are compassionate. You must not think of those other hours, you must not think of what they do in the shadows. . . . Anne bringing the empty glass back to the wine dealer, were they not perhaps coarse and obscene? These are but creatures of the body. They have

come out of some somber impasse to give a kiss of pity under the glaring light of some full-throated thoroughfare. In that moment they were divine.

"You must forget all the rest."

Le Livre de Monelle appeared in 1894. In the journals Maeterlinck, Mallarmé, Coppée and Rodenbach acclaimed it as the masterpiece of their years.

Once *Le Livre de Monelle* appeared, Marcel Schwob never again mentioned Monelle or the part she played in his life. Theirs was a variation of the story of Pygmalion and Galatea for he had loved Monelle in the flesh. When she died he fashioned of her a work of art. To the world he ever held this cold front, and any discussion of Monelle with his friends was simply as a piece of writing. In his heart? It is simple to formulate a philosophy of nihilism but difficult to execute it. "Do not look too long into black amber," he wrote. Yet it would seem that from the time of Monelle's death until his own, Marcel Schwob peered long into the black amber of his dreams.

For many months after the death of Monelle he sought the company of little children. There were always about him one or two of those with whom he and Monelle had played. They were the Sisters of Monelle, these little children, and in his pocket they might find thread, needles and dolls' thimbles and little pieces of cloth out of which to

fashion luxurious gowns for their dolls. And it was not only that he did this in the Gardens of the Luxembourg, but even the offices of the editors and publishers of the journals for which he wrote were invaded in this fashion. They were shocked, they were flabbergasted, these conventional men of letters, to see the young genius they had nourished and supported idly amusing himself before their desks telling fairy stories to a faithful coterie of children.

With the death of Georges Guieysse, Marcel Schwob had become a mature man. With the death of Monelle he blossomed into true greatness. Monelle had brought him from within himself into new and strange realms of thought and life, she humanized him. To him she was both child and lover, and the love they shared together was beyond that love which man usually finds with woman. With her, life assumed new and undreamed-of values: values which were to make him more important in the world of letters, a man of new and greater depths to his friends. Later he was to love, to worship and to marry a woman, but it was not the same relationship he had known with Monelle. No thing, no person in his later life came as close to him as his memories of her; could touch the inner part of him that came to be in that short adventure in the art of living.

His first work after *Le Livre de Monelle* was *Mimes* in imitation of the poet Herodas. This book had been conceived and partly executed in 1891 be-

fore the translation of the *Poésies de Meleagre* by Pierre Louys which appeared in 1893, but the body of the *Mimes* was written in 1894 and the previous fragments rewritten. In 1891 a papyrus manuscript of Herodas was discovered and published. Schwob's imagination was fired, and perhaps he contemplated a translation, but if such was the case he soon abandoned that idea for a series of prose poems of his own creation in the style and form of Herodas. It was first printed in facsimile of the original manuscript by the *Mercure de France*; the volume was dedicated to his dear and close friend, Alphonse Daudet, and for Paul Arène, Paul Claudel, Alphonse Daudet, Anatole France, Edmund de Goncourt, Aman Jean, Paul Margueritte, Catulle Mendès, Jules Renard and Oscar Wilde was each composed a *Mime*.

Though *Mimes* was a great success and was acclaimed by the critics of France and England as a masterpiece yet this success little lightened his days. Renard writes in his journal at this time: "We egotists were aghast and astounded by the fashion of Marcel Schwob's long suffering and grief for the death of only one person." He was the despair of his friends and especially of Léon Daudet, the son of Alphonse Daudet. Léon Daudet insisted that Schwob accompany him in his travels. Together they went to Holland, and later to England where Schwob for the first time since the death of Monelle

became interested again in the things of the world. He visited and enjoyed for the first time the literary landmarks so long familiar to him through his exhaustive knowledge of English literature.

This voyage took place in the late autumn of 1894, and throughout it all the pilgrimage nearest to his heart was the journey to Box Hill, the home of Meredith. For Schwob, Meredith was a discovery. Tolstoy and Ibsen had achieved a merited renown in France but Meredith was unknown. On his way from London to Dorking he writes that he searched for some word, some phrase to epitomize the vital significance of Meredith. With happy fortune he remembered the hungry cry heard at the end of the sonnet sequence *Modern Love*—"More brain, O Lord, More brain!"

This more than generous admiration was reciprocal and what had begun with a casual meeting ended with a deep friendship. There exists a letter to Schwob from Meredith, March 9, 1894, commenting on the former's literary work. "I have voyaged through a savage country with your *Roi au Masque D'Or*," he writes. "From beginning to end your style is admirable and so much French so well written. You excel your contemporaries with the vividness and the force of your imagination, a virtue of eternal joy for the reader. The *Flute* is a true poem, *Le Sabbat de Mofflaines* (nocturne *Moyen Age*) and the *Peste* brought to my memory the

rapidity and the brevity of the stories of Benvenuto Cellini.

"I am still incapable of foretelling the route which you will take. I hope that it will be in the realm of creative writing for I am troubled by the thought that you will give yourself too much to literary criticism. Here in England we have much need of critics. In France there is need for less criticism and more creative writing. I would gladly renounce the honor of having you study my work if I might have in the place of such an article another story such as the *Flute* or the *Sabbat*."

Throughout his life Schwob was the unsettled nomad. Some restlessness ever kept him moving from this place to that. Perhaps it was a heritage from his Hebrew forefathers, but whatever it was, his was an unquiet spirit. From the *Bibliothèque Mazarin* to the *rue de l'Université*, then upon his return from England we find him installed in the *rue Vaneau*, and then in 1896 in the *rue du Bac*.

The picture is a pathetic one of this lonely spirit ever trudging from one place to another; never knowing the peace and the rest which rises from a sense of permanence. Possessions he had but few, but they were part of his life and as dear. Like the wandering Jew, he bore in a pack all that he could call his own. A small collection of Japanese prints and engravings, a library not great in magnitude but choice and pleasing to a scholar's mind. They were

most of them ancient books, his classics, the rare and the beautiful, and a generous assortment of scholarly works and commentaries, his tools of life. These and a miscellaneous collection of bibelots and two divans with red velvet coverings were all his worldly belongings. To those who were his intimates these transitory refuges were havens of delight. There they collected about him of evenings and listened to his never-ending current of conversation to be broken only when he snatched a book from the shelves to read some pertinent quotation or a passage of particular delight. Then there were those other moments when for hours on end he would read to his friends from one of his favorite English or German authors, freely translating as he went along, and it might be Goethe or it might be De Foe or Stevenson or Poe, and once at a dinner party at the home of Alphonse Daudet he burst in with a recently acquired copy of *Leaves of Grass*. He swept aside all the small talk of the dinner table and insisted that the guests become an audience to a reading of Walt Whitman.

In 1896 he met Marguerite Moreno, an actress at the *Comédie Française*. If one's life can be divided into moments this then was the third great moment in the life of Marcel Schwob. With Georges Guieysse he had known great friendship and devastating grief. With Monelle he knew a love beyond the ordinary realm of human experience. With

Marguerite he knew love, a deep love, but theirs was not an unusual story. Beyond love there was, however, a deeper significance within the joining of the lives of these two persons. Marguerite was intimate to his thoughts, his desires, his aspirations as Monelle could never have been. Hers was an understanding and a companionship in things intellectual which he had yearned for throughout his life and at last fully achieved with Marguerite in the *rue de Bac*.

Pierre Champion who came to know him at this period of his life writes that he seldom left his apartment during these months save for an expedition to the *Bibliothèque Nationale* or the *Archives*. With an almost breathless eagerness he worked upon a multitude of projects, and Marguerite Moreno was constantly at his side. Occasionally she had to leave him, and as records of these short separations there remains a correspondence vivid and vital, simple and delicate with ever the recurring theme of deep passion. Here were spent the most happy, the most joyous moments of his life, but these moments were destined to be short-lived. In 1896 he became ill. From month to month he suffered in the hope that he might be cured. What baffled his medical advisers and later caused his death is believed to-day to have been cancer of the stomach.

In the summer of 1900 his health necessitated his leaving Paris. He crossed to England where for

many weeks he stayed with Charles Whibley in Surrey.

One of his sources of income at this time was the reading of manuscripts for the publishing house of Calman-Levy. During his illness this work had accumulated and between ill health and disinclination it was fast becoming a burden when Marguerite undertook to relieve him of this responsibility.

In the end of August of this year he writes to Marguerite:

"The third volume of Rabelais had appeared in the Tudor Translations. It carries an introduction by Whibley, and Henley has dedicated it to me:

To

MARCEL SCHWOB

Artist in the Language and the Slang of France

Scholar in Many Tongues

Student and Historian of François Villon

This Frenchman's Englishing

Of an Amazing

And Immortal Ancestor.

July 1900.

In September of this year he and Marguerite Moreno were married. They stayed with the Whibleys for ten days and then visited Meredith at Box Hill. These few weeks appear to have been the happiest of his life; his health seemed better, Marguerite was by his side, and together they were cheered by the warmth and the admiration of his English friends.

Toward the end of the month they returned to Paris and from that moment his days became unending torture. He was again installed in his apartment in the *rue Valois* in the care of Ting, his faithful Chinese servant whom he had acquired during the Exposition. Schwob had seen Ting in the Chinese Pavilion and had become intrigued with the exotic fancy of possessing a Chinese servant. Like so much of his life this was a wild enthusiasm. In his straitened financial circumstances he obligated himself to yet another burden. There was some sort of a contract which stipulated that upon Ting's death Schwob was to repatriate his body. But despite this lugubrious qualification to their intercourse they became devotedly attached to each other, though at times, if one may judge by his letters, the sick man was obliged to play nurse to his servant.

He returned to his work at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and the *Archives* but his health rapidly failed. He was now working hard upon his long-dreamed-of *Life of François Villon*. In November Gaston Paris completed his popular life of Villon for the series *Les Grands Écrivains Français*. By the kindness of Schwob he was able to include some new and important material which Schwob had uncovered in his researches.

Schwob might have finished his work late in that year but once again his health broke, and he went to the Isle of Jersey in a vain attempt to cure

his mysterious malady. It was during his stay on the island that Francis Marion Crawford wrote asking him if he would be interested in making a translation of *Francesca da Rimini*. Following his letter Crawford came to the island with the manuscript and Schwob began and finished the work before the year was out. In 1902 Sarah Bernhardt played his version in Paris.

His contribution to the field of scholarly research was tremendous. In his work on Villon he uncovered much that was new, and he is the despair of later workers on this subject for there seems to be little hope of adding to his store of Villon knowledge. In the field of philology and in the argot and jargon of the Middle Ages his work is of the greatest importance. Nor was his scholarly work solely limited to the Middle Ages, for his accomplishments in the field of classical study are in nowise inferior.

He was one of the foremost critics of his time. His essays on Meredith and Stevenson are of a timeless value. His conference on *Annabella et Giovanni*, given at the *Théâtre des Œuvres*, shows an insight into English letters which in an Englishman would have been remarkable, and which in a Frenchman is more than remarkable. His translation of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* is fair proof of his powers of critical selection and his competency in the field of foreign literatures. His masterful execution of this work has been remarked as a perfect translation.

Translation fascinated Schwob; it was an expression of scholarly mind as opposed to the creative artist in him, yet he practised it as an art. The great Elizabethan translations of the classics he studied with intent and drew from them certain virtues which he inculcated into his own work. *Moll Flanders* interested him as an English masterpiece, but he was likewise intrigued by the problem of transposing into equivalent French the old and sometimes forgotten London colloquialisms and slang of the streets. The translation of Catullus which he had produced while a schoolboy was his model. He searched for some analogy between the development of the English and French languages and from his knowledge of modern philology happily discovered his medium. Nor was this the extent of his translations. He produced a French version of *Hamlet* for Sarah Bernhardt which is said to excel all French translations of Shakespeare, and just before his death he completed *Macbeth* for her. The field of his minor translations extended from De Quincey's *Life of Kant* to Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* and many short pieces and fragments which were never published and are known only to his friends.

But beyond all this Marcel Schwob was a creative writer. In the introduction to his first creative effort, *Le Cœur Double*, he writes: "The heart of man is divided; within it egoism and charity hold equal sway. Egoism gives rise to personal fear

which is the emotion terror; charity is but another name for pity. . . . So," he continues, "the purpose of this book is to show to the heart of man the history of terror and pity, to show that the events of the world exterior are analagous to the events of the world interior, the heart of man; to present in a single moment of intense life the knowledge that we are but living virtually and actually the entire history of the universe." There follows a procession of haunting figures; down through the ages they march. Lilith becomes part of his story, a little amber merchant in the dark ages evidences that the complexity of her heart and the story of her life rise above all time and are as true to-day as they were two thousand years ago. Fragments of old legends, a suggestion from a chronicle of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gives the material for a story which, removed from its setting, differs little as Schwob tells it from the Paris he knew and lived in.

Le Roi au Masque D'Or presents a series of fairy stories for grown-up people, told in a malicious vein. He chooses at random and calls up a king or a beggar to walk upon the stage of life. They each wear the mask with which they have chosen to go through life but before their piece is done the mask has been lowered and they stand naked before the audience.

One of the early enthusiasms of Marcel Schwob's life was Robert Louis Stevenson. At the

moment of its publication he seized upon a copy of *Treasure Island* and from that time Stevenson became one of his heroes. In 1888 he wrote Stevenson concerning his work. In Sidney Colvin's edition of Stevenson's letters there is a note to the effect that Schwob's communications were the first Stevenson received from any foreign confrère. In their first letters there was expressed the promise that they should one day meet in Paris and talk over Villon and their beloved fifteenth century.

In 1890 he communicated to Stevenson his discoveries concerning François Villon knowing that he would interest the author of *A Lodging for the Night*. We have Stevenson's letter in answer:

"August 19. Union Club Sidney—1890

"My dear Schwob, *Mais alors, vous avez tous les bonheurs, vous!* More about Villon; it seems incredible, when it is put in order, pray send it to me.

"You wish to translate the Black Arrow: dear sir, you are hereby authorized; but I warn you, I do not like the work. Ah, if you who know so well both tongues, and have taste and instruction—if you would but take a fancy to translate a book of mine that I myself admired—for we sometimes admire our own—or I do—with what satisfaction would the authority be granted! But these things are too much to be expected. *Vous ne detestez pas alors mes bonnes femmes? moi, je les deteste.* I have never pleased myself with any women of mine save

two character parts, one of only a few lines—the Countess of Rosen, and Madame Desprez in the *Treasure of Franchard*.”

A year later Stevenson writes: “I give you permission gladly to take your choice out of my works and translate what you shall prefer, too much honored that so clever a young man should think it worth the pains. . . .

“Whatever you do, do not neglect to send me what you publish on Villon: I look forward to that with lively interest. I have no photograph at hand, but I will send one when I can. It would be kind if you would do the like, for I do not see much chance of our meeting in the flesh: and a name, and a handwriting, and an address, and even a style! I know about as much of Tacitus, and more of Horace; it is not enough between contemporaries, such as we still are. . . .

“You must translate me soon; you will soon have better to do than to transverse the work of others”

Poor Schwob was destined to know little more of his friend than a name, a handwriting, an address and a style.

In 1894 Stevenson wrote him thanking him for a copy of *Mimes* which had appeared that year.

“I have read *Mimes* twice as a whole; and now, as I write, I am reading it again as it were by accident, and a piece at a time, my eye catching a word

and traveling obediently on through the whole number. It is a graceful book, essentially graceful, with its haunting agreeable melancholy, its pleasing savour of antiquity. . . . The XVII, XVIII and IV pieces of this collection. You will never excel them; I should think the '*Hermes*' never."

Three months after Stevenson had written this letter word reached Paris that the great English author of the South Seas was dead at Vailima. Marcel Schwob commenced again a study on Stevenson he had long been working upon and in the *Mercure de France* of that year there appeared his essay "R. L. S.," so dear to Stevenson lovers.

Nor is it strange that in 1901 when doctors advised Schwob to take a sea trip in southern waters that his sentiment and desire should have taken him to the resting-place of his friend.

A series of letters to Madame Schwob was the only journal of this voyage. Accompanied by Ting the dying man set off half-way around the world. At Sydney he fell ill and then Ting came down with a fever and Schwob must nurse him; Schwob in the throes of pneumonia, Ting with some depressing illness which failed of diagnosis. Somehow they both survived and started back home. This had been a voyage of disappointment. His health had been little improved, he longed for the love and companionship of Marguerite and his letters bespeak the prevision that he had not long to be with her.

In March, 1902, he returned to Paris. Once again he moved. This time his books, his bibelots, his Japanese prints, his red velvet-covered divans and his Chinese servant were installed in number eleven *rue Saint Louis en l'Île*. On this quiet island in his beloved city he settled himself for the remainder of his life—a little more than two years.

For a long time he had been planning to write a satire on the workings of the journalistic mind. From a few odd notes jotted down here and there during his travels and with a scrap-book of clippings from Paris newspapers he wove the fabric of *Les Mœurs du Diurnals*. With the vivid imagination of his classic predecessors, Lucian and Petronious, he launched himself upon an attack so bitter and yet withal so clever, so devastating, as to rock the journalistic world of Paris. In his catalogue of the *Hundred Books of the Journalist* Rabelais lives once again. He signed this book with the pseudonym *Loyson-Bridet*—silly goose! Some critics have called it his masterpiece. Those who read it to-day can find but one signal fault—*Les Mœurs du Diurnals* is too subtle and too sophisticated for the average reader. Worthy to rank with the great satires of the world it serves too rare a feast; its ancient wines pall upon any but the tutored palate, and so to-day it is known solely to those whose sophistication permits them to wander farther afield than the path of the ordinary reader.

With the publication of this book Schwob's health again ebbed. His energy was not sufficient to permit any creative effort, nor could he suffer the strain and drudgery of long hours of research at the *Nationale* or the *Archives*. He idled through his days in reading and desultory study. One of his amusements was to search out the history of his Ile Saint Louis and especially of number eleven *rue Saint Louis en l'Ile*, and in the evening when his friends were about him he would regale them with this or that curious fact or incident in the past of this island in their city.

However, despite his bodily ill health, this was the period of his greatest intellectual activity. He conceived plans for a whole lifetime of work. He had long dreamed of writing a life of Saint Francis of Assisi, and in 1903 he signed a contract for this book with Piazza. He dreamed of writing plays, he projected a study of Angelique de Longueval and there was always the great biography of the *Life and Times of François Villon* which he had planned and worked on since his school-days.

During these last two years of his life Schwob seems to have amused himself with entertaining his friends and holding informal salon on the Ile Saint Louis. Quite legitimately looked upon as one of the foremost literary men of his day, there clustered about him the famous and those who were yet to be famous in the world of letters. Foreign writers sel-

dom left Paris in these days without having at least made his acquaintance.

In the summer of 1904 he accepted the invitation of Marion Crawford to sail in southern waters. He set off upon this journey as upon his previous ones with hope for recovery burning high in his heart. He returned as from those others, depressed and disappointed, but this time with a forevision of doom.

Like some great tree or plant when faced with death he fell into a fever of activity and tried to produce all that lay within him. He felt a great urge to make a record of his unfulfilled work that others might complete what he had begun.

One of his last acts was to give a course of lectures at the *École des Hautes Études*. Sick and dying, he had literally to be carried into the lecture room. What delicious vindication it must have been for him to rise, to speak and command attention and respect in the very halls where fifteen years before he had been disqualified as unfit to teach. Nor were his pupils the straggling and only occasionally impassioned youths of the University. They were the great figures in the scholarly and literary world, and there came to sit before him in all humility Michel Bréal, the master, learning from the pupil. It was Michel Bréal, his teacher, to whom he dedicated his first work the *Étude sur L'Argot Français* in 1889.

On the thirteenth of February, 1905, he went to

the *Bibliothèque Nationale* to examine again what he believed to be a manuscript in the very hand of François Villon. Faithful he was to the very end to this field of study. He returned to the Ile Saint Louis for the last time.

Even in his fever and pain he charmed with his sparkling conversation those friends who came to visit him. On the twenty-sixth of February he quietly called to his bedside his brother Maurice Schwob, and then later in the day he asked that the ever faithful Ting come to him. Madame Schwob was touring the Midi with her theatrical company. So it was alone with brother and servant that Marcel Schwob peacefully died that afternoon. Pierre Champion says of him that "he was a man of the future"; rather let us say that Marcel Schwob was a man of all time. There are twenty centuries he might have fitted into with as little anachronism as he lived in his own. He was a classicist of finely tutored senses, but beyond being a classicist he was a true humanist nor was he without a rare dash of the modern spirit, this man who walked in equal company with Herodas, Catullus, Petronius, François Villon and François Rabelais, Meredith and Walt Whitman.

WILLIAM BROWN MELONEY V.

THE WORDS OF
M O N E L L E

THE WORDS OF MONELLE

MONELLE found me in the down lands where
I had gone and she took me by the
hand.

—Do not be surprised, she said to me. You
know me, yet you do not know me.

—You will find me again; and again you will
lose me.

—You will forget me and you will remember
me, but close upon memory there will follow forget-
fulness.

* * * * *

And Monelle said:

—I will speak to you of the Little Women of
Pleasure that you may know of the beginning.

* * * * *

—Bonaparte, the Slayer Bonaparte, when he
was just eighteen, met a little prostitute beneath the
iron gates of the Palais Royale. She was pale and
shook like a young tree under the force of the cold
wind. And she said to him: "But one must eat."

—Neither you nor I know the name of the little
woman that Napoleon took that November night to

his room in the Hotel de Cherbourg. We know only that she came to Paris from Nantes in Brittany; that she was weary and tired and that she was soon abandoned by her lover. She was simple and good, and her voice was gentle and like a soft spring wind. All these things Bonaparte remembered but he did not remember her name. And I think that later the memory of her voice brought tears to his eyes and that many winter nights he searched for her but never found her.

—For you see, the little prostitutes go but once into the crowds of night to perform their tasks of kindness. The poor Anne found Thomas De Quincey (The Opium Eater) fainting under a great light in Oxford Street. Her eyes filled with tears of compassion, and she brought him a glass of sweet wine and she kissed him and nursed him. When he was well she disappeared into the night. Perhaps she died. "She coughed much the last night I saw her," De Quincey has written. Yet perhaps she still walked the hard way of the streets, but though De Quincey searched for her and braved the laughter and the scorn of those he asked, Anne was for ever lost to him. When he again possessed the comforts and the luxuries of life he dreamed of her and prayed that he might share all that he possessed with her. Yet while his prayers held hopes his dreams pictured her sick, dying, living in desolation or in the wretched foulness of some London bordel, but

wherever her life took her, she bore away all the love and the pity of his great heart.

—For you see, these little women call out to you, in the blackness of the night; they utter a cry of compassion, and they hold your hand in their emaciated hands. They only understand you when you are unhappy; they can cry with you and console you—but they can not laugh with you.

—Nelly came to Dostoievsky, came to him out of her infamous house, dying with fever; a long time she looked at him with her great black troubled eyes. The little Sonia, she who lived even as the others, kissed the assassin Rodion after the confession of his crime. “You are lost!” she said in despair. Then suddenly strengthened, she threw herself upon him and kissed him passionately. . . . In a wave of pity she wrote: “In all the earth there is no living being as unhappy as you,” and then she broke into tears.

—As Anne, as the little unnamed girl who came to the young and sad Bonaparte, so is Nelly lost in the mists of the evenings. Dostoievsky does not say what became of the pale and fleshless Sonia. Neither you nor I know if she remained with Raskolnikoff to the end of his penal sentence. I do not believe it. She went into his arms having suffered too much and loved too much.

—None of them may stay long with you. They would be too sad and too ashamed to remain. When you no longer weep, you have no need of them. They

teach you the lesson they have learned from you, then they flee. They come through the cold and the rain to kiss your brow, to brush their lips across your eyes, to drive from you the terror and the sadness that you know, and then once more they are lost in the shadows. When they have done perhaps they must go to others who have need of them.

—You only know them while they are compassionate. You must not think of those other hours, you must not think of what they do in the shadows. Nelly in a bordel, Sonia drunken on a park bench, Anne bringing the empty glass back to the wine dealer, were they not perhaps coarse and obscene? These are the creatures of the body. They have come out of a somber impasse to give a kiss of pity under the glaring light of some full-thronged thoroughfare. In that moment they were divine.

—You must forget all the rest.

Monelle was silent and for some moments regarded me.

—I have come out of the night, she said, and I will go back into the night. I too am only a little prostitute.

* * * * *

And Monelle said:

—I pity you. I pity you, my friend.

—Nevertheless, I will go back into the night; for you must lose me before ever you find me. And

even if you find me I will but escape from you again.

—For I am she who is alone.

* * * * *

And Monelle said:

—Because I am alone you will call me Monelle; but you will dream that I have all these other names.

—I am this one and I am that one, but lastly I am she who has no name.

—I will take you to my sisters who are even as I and they will seem to you none other than the prostitutes you have seen in the streets.

—You will see them tormented by egotism and voluptuousness, by cruelty and pride, by patience and pity, and you will never more know peace.

—You will look for them far and wide.

—And you will find yourself and will find me, and you will lose me and I will lose myself.

—For I am that which is lost as it is found.

* * * * *

And Monelle said:

—To-day a little woman will touch your hand and then flee from you;

—For all things are fugitive, but Monelle is the most fugitive of all.

—And after you find me I will tell you many things in this fair plain and you will write the Book of Monelle.

* * * * *

Monelle gave me a hollow ferule and at the end there burned a rose filament of flame.

—Take this torch, she said, and burn! Burn everything upon the earth and all that is in the skies. When you have burned all, then break this ferule and stamp out the flame, for nothing must be transmitted.

—Do this that you may be one of the Narthecophori; that you may destroy by fire and that the fire which has descended from Heaven may rise up again to Heaven.

* * * * *

And Monelle said: I will speak to you of destruction.

* * * * *

—I give you the word: Destroy! Destroy! Destroy! Destroy within yourself and destroy all that which lies about you. Make place in the world for your soul and for the souls of others.

—Destroy all good and all evil. Rubbish and ruins are of the same genre.

—Destroy the ancient habitations of men and the ancient habitations of the soul; dead things are but mirrors which distort and deform.

—Destroy, for all creation comes from destruction.

—That the superior good may exist the inferior good must be annihilated.

—To imagine a new art the old art must be destroyed. So it is that the new art must be iconoclastic.

—All generation proceeds from débris, nothing is new in this world but the form.

—And form must be destroyed.

* * * * *

And Monelle said: I will speak to you of creation.

* * * * *

—The desire for that which is new is only the appency of the soul wishing to create itself.

—The soul rejects the old forms as serpents cast off their old skins.

—And those who patiently collect the cast-off skins of serpents sadden the young serpents because they hold a magical power over them.

—For those who possess the old skins of serpents prevent the young serpents from transforming themselves.

—That is why the young serpents only cast off their skins in the green tangle of great dense thickets; and why once each year the young snakes come together to burn their old skins.

—Be then like to the seasons of the year: destructive and creative.

—Build your house yourself, and yourself burn it.

—Do not throw the débris behind you for each shall build from his own ruins.

—Do not build at all in the night which has passed.

—Contemplate that which you have newly built from the farthest transport of your soul.

—Desiring only that which is new, fashion for yourself new Gods.

* * * * *

And Monelle said: I will speak to you of the Gods.

* * * * *

—Let the old Gods die; weep not before their tombs.

—For the old Gods have fled their sepulchres.

—Do not at all protect new Gods by swathing them in cloths.

—Let all Gods flee as soon as they are created.

—Let all creation perish as it is created.

—Let the old God offer his creation to the young God that it may be destroyed by him.

—Let all Gods be Gods only of the moment.

* * * * *

And Monelle said: I will speak to you of moments.

* * * * *

—Regard all things under the aspect of the moment.

—Let your ego live in the joyousness of the moment.

—Think only in the moment. All thought which continues becomes contradiction.

—Love in the moment. All love which continues becomes hate.

—Be sincere in the moment. All sincerity which continues becomes false.

—Be just in the moment. All justice which continues becomes tyranny.

—Act in the moment. All action which continues becomes static.

—Be happy in the moment. All happiness which continues becomes grief.

—Respect moments; and make no liaison between things.

—Do not delay the moment. You will only hasten agony.

—Consider each moment as a cradle and a coffin: that all death and all life may seem to you strange and new.

* * * * *

And Monelle said: I will speak to you of life and death.

* * * * *

—Moments are like to a chessboard fashioned in squares of black and white.

—Do not pattern your life solely in the squares of white for you will afterward only come to the squares of black.

—In crossing each black square keep in mind the white square just beyond.

—Say not: I live to-day, to-morrow I will die.

Divide not the realm of reality by the words life and death. Rather say: To-day I live and I die.

—Drain to the uttermost dregs each moment; both the positive and the negative.

—The autumn rose lives only one season; each morning it opens; each night it closes.

—Be like the roses: Open the petals of your being to the unrest of extreme pleasure and the monotony of the monotonous.

—Do this that all ecstasy may die within you; that all pleasure will long to die.

—Do this that unhappiness will be unknown to your soul as are cares to the butterfly which floats upon a dawn wind. Do not harbor black thoughts nor too long look upon black amber.

—Do this that joy will be unknown to you. Do not amuse yourself with golden beetles.

—Do this that all understanding flame and then extinguish itself like the flash of a falling star.

—Do this that all your happiness be disparted sharply by deep contrasts; that your joys shall not be exceeded by your griefs.

—Have the atomistic contemplation of the Universe.

—Do not resist the nature of things; nor turn your face away from the reality of things as does a fretful child.

—Go in peace in the red light of early morning and the soft gray mists of late evening. Let your life be a subtle blending of dawn and sunset.

—Blend death with life and divide them into moments.

—Do not wait for death: it is within you. Be the comrade of death for death is as you are.

—Think not upon the meaning of death, nor dream of ancient deaths. Vary the kinds of death as are varied the kinds of life.

—Consider all living things as uncertain, all dead things as certain.

* * * * *

And Monelle said: I will speak to you of things dead.

* * * * *

—Sedulously burn the dead, and let their ashes float away upon the four winds of heaven.

—Sedulously burn all actions that live in the past, and obliterate their ashes, lest like the Phœnix from their own refuse they recreate themselves.

—Do not mock the dead, nor even kiss their faces. Neither laugh at them nor cry over them; forget them.

—Do not dream of the past nor construct beautiful sepulchres for distant memories; dream only to vanquish the moments which will come.

—Mistrust the corpses of all things.

—Kiss not the dead for they suffocate the living.

—Regard the dead only as things with which to build.

—Do not weary yourself by walking in abandoned paths. Refresh and purify your soul by bathing in clear new waters.

—Breathe deep but beware the *haleine* of the dead.

—Do not contemplate your past life nor the past lives of others. Collect not at all the used and empty shells of things.

—Avoid the resting-places of dead things. Cemeteries and all that is dead breed pestilence.

* * * * *

And Monelle said: I will speak to you of actions.

* * * * *

—The clay cup shatters within your hands. Break all cups when you have drunk from them.

—Extinguish the lamp of life which the lamp bearer holds out to you for all old lamps are smoky.

—Bequeath nothing to yourself; neither pleasure nor sorrow.

—Be never the slave of the clothes you wear, nor of your soul nor of your body.

—Never strike twice with the same weapon.

—Never think of yourself when you will be dead; let your image be carried in clear running water where fate decrees.

—Flee from ruins and never cry amidst them.

—When at night you have shed your clothes,

shed also the soul you have worn that day. Be always at all times naked.

—All satiety will then seem to you as mortal. Toss it off before it comes to you.

—Do not live upon the past; nourish yourself with what the future holds.

—Confess nothing that you have done, for things that have been done are dead; confess only that which you will do in the future.

—Do not stop to cull the flowers which line the road. Content yourself in the appearance of things. But discard appearances and never think of them.

—Never turn backward upon your road for behind you there flames Sodom, and you will be changed into a statue of frozen tears.

—Never look behind you; nor too far into the future. Look within yourself.

—Be astonished at nothing in the comparison of things remembered. Be astonished only by your ignorance and by that which is new.

—Be astonished at all that you come before, for in life all things are different, as in death all things are the same.

—Build in differences; destroy in similitudes.

* * * * *

—Do not look for the permanent for it exists neither upon the earth nor in the heavens.

—Only reason is permanent. You will destroy reason and then your perception will change.

—Fear not to contradict yourself for there is no contradiction in the present.

—Do not love your unhappiness for it will soon die.

—Consider your nails which ever grow and the little scales of skin which ever fall from you.

* * * * *

—Be forgetful of all things.

—With a sharp sword you will patiently destroy all memory, methodically, as an ancient emperor killed flies.

—Do not permit past happiness to color the future.

—Neither remember nor anticipate.

—Do not say: I work that I may achieve—I work to forget. But forget achievement and even the work.

—Rise up against all work; against all activity that exceeds the moment. Rise up!

—When you travel have neither a beginning nor an ending to your voyagings; for such things do not exist beyond the realm of meaningless expression. Rather let your every step be an infinite projection.

—You will efface with your left foot the imprint of your right foot.

—Let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth.

—Know not even yourself.

—Think not upon liberty. Forget even yourself.

* * * * *

And Monelle said: I will speak to you of my words.

* * * * *

—Words exist as words only while they are being uttered.

—Words which have been hoarded up are dead and they breed pestilence.

—Listen to the words I speak and heed not the words I have written.

* * * * *

Having spoken in this wise, Monelle was silent and bore an air of sadness; for she had to return into the night.

* * * * *

And she said to me as from a great distance.

—Forget me and I will return to you.

* * * * *

And I looked across the fields and rising before my eyes I saw the sisters of Monelle.



THE SISTERS OF
M O N E L L E

THE SISTERS OF MONELLE

THE EGOIST

IN THE little enclosure of hedgerow which surrounded the schoolhouse on the cliff-top a little girl stood holding in her hand a small package carefully tied in a red ribbon.

—Be careful now, came the little girl's voice. And pay attention for it will break easily.

A fine rain was falling on the rocks near at hand and its sound faintly mingled with the vague tricklings of the tiny stream which were echoed from the base of the cliff. The young sailor who had been watching from the shadows of the deep fringe of trees came forward and said in a low voice:

—Hurry now! We must get along.

To which the little girl answered:

—No, no, no! I can not. I must protect the paper; and I want to carry my own things. Egoist! Egoist! Please go! You can see well enough how wet I am getting.

The young sailor clenched his teeth in anger and seized the package from the arms of the child. The damp paper gave way and there floated to the miry ground little triangles of violet and yellow silk stamped with flowery designs, some velour ribbons, a doll's pantaloons in batiste, a golden locket in the shape of a heart, and a new spool of red thread. The little girl ran into the shrubbery; her hands were torn by the sharp twigs and her lips trembled.

—There! You see! she said. You are so stubborn and now all my things have been spoiled.

Her eyes trembled and her lips wavered as she began to cry.

—Leave me, leave me! I want no more of you. Go! You have made me cry and now I shall return to Mademoiselle.

Sadly she gathered up her things.

—My pretty spool of red thread is lost, she said, and I so wanted to embroider a dress for Lily!

From the torn pocket of her little pinafore there hung the porcelain head of a doll, crowned with an extraordinary shock of blond hair.

—Come, the young sailor whispered. I am sure that Mademoiselle is looking for you even now.

She wiped her eyes with the back of her little inkstained hand and allowed herself to be led away.

—And what are we to do now, the young sailor asked? Yesterday you no longer wanted to see Mademoiselle.

—She beat me with the broomstick, said the child, pursing her lips. Beat me and locked me in the coal-bin with the spiders and the big beetles. When I go back I will put the big broom in her bed, I will burn down her house with the coal and—and I will kill her with her scissors. Yes, that is what I will do. (She pouted her lips.) Oh! Take me away from her, far away; so far that I will never see her again. I am afraid of her pointed nose and her glasses. Ah! But I got even with her before I left. You know the portraits of her father and mother framed in red velour and hung above the chimney? Old they are, not like my mama. I smeared yellow salt all over them. And I did a good job. Ugh! But they were frightful.

She was silent for a moment, and then:

—But why don't you speak to me.

The young sailor looked out over the sea. It was somber and misty. A curtain of rain veiled the bay. He could no longer see the sand-bars or the buoys marking the channel, though occasionally the humid shroud parted to show a great expanse of black seaweed.

—No one can travel on a night like this, said the young sailor. We will have to seek shelter in the hut of the customs officer where there is a mound of hay.

—I don't like that. It will be dirty, said the little girl.

—Nevertheless, said the young sailor, do you prefer to return to Mademoiselle?

—Egoist! cried the child in a burst of sobs. If I had known you were like this. If I had known! Oh! Oh! I who do not know you at all.

—You did not have to go away. You do not have to come with me. And anyway who was it that called to me the other morning as I was going down the road?

—I? Oh! What a story-teller! I would not have left Mademoiselle if you had not told me to. I am afraid of you. I want to go home. I don't want to sleep in the hay. I want to sleep in my bed.

—You are free to do what you want, said the young sailor.

The little girl shrugged her shoulders and continued to walk along. After some moments she said:

—If I want for better and find fault it is because I am wet through and cold.

* * * * *

The Customs hut lay on the shore and faced the sea. The straw of its thatched roof rustled silently in the wind which blew across the bay. They pushed open the door. At the back of the hut there was a sort of alcove fashioned from the sides of boxes and filled with hay.

The little girl sat down and the young sailor wrapped her feet and legs deep in the dry grass.

—It scratches me, she said.

—It will warm you, the young sailor replied.

He seated himself inside the door and watched the light of the day die over the sands. He shivered slightly in the cold and damp.

—You, at least, are not cold! said the little girl. But I suppose you will be sick and then what shall I do?

The young sailor nodded his head. For some moments they remained silent in the day's fading light. Despite the overcast sky they could feel the night beginning to shut them in.

—I am hungry, said the girl. At Mademoiselle's this evening there will be roast goose stuffed with chestnuts. Oh! You think of nothing. It was I who brought the crusts of bread and what with the rain they are now only pulp. Hold out your hand!

She reached out toward him. Her fingers were stuck together with the cold dough.

—I will take the customs skiff on the shore and try to find some crabs, said the sailor. There are always some to be had at the base of the Pierres-Noires.

—I will be afraid here, all alone.

—Then you don't want to eat?

The little girl was silent.

The young sailor shook the straw from his jersey and slipped out of the door. A gray blanket

of rain enveloped him; but the child within the hut could hear his feet suck in the thick mud at each step.

Then there was only the rain and the heavy rhythmic silence of the rain. Darkness came, deep and sad. The dinner hour at Mademoiselle's was now long past. Bedtime came and went, and now under hanging oil lamps all the world slept in clean white beds. Far out in the storm a gull cried. The great wind thundered and bellowed like many cannons in the great holes under the cliff. Waiting for her dinner the girl fell asleep: she awakened suddenly. The young sailor must be playing with the crabs. The Egoist! She well knew that boats always float on the water; that people only drown when they have no boats.

—He will be quite surprised to find me asleep, she said to herself. I shan't answer him, not a word.

* * * * *

Toward midnight the little girl woke to find the hut lighted by a lantern. As she lay there curled up like a mouse she could see a man in uniform with a vizored cap watching her. His face in the light glistened with water.

—Where is the skiff? he asked.

And vexedly the child cried:

—Oh! I was sure of it! He has not found any crabs for me and he has lost the skiff.

THE VOLUPTUARY

THAT is horrible, said the little girl. It bleeds and the blood is white.

She slit with her finger-nail the green pod of a poppy, while her small companion passively watched her. They had just been playing at highway robbery among the chestnut trees and afterward they had bombarded the cluster of rose-bushes with the fresh chestnuts. Of some they had opened the brittle shells and thrown the light husks at the kitten which sat mewing on the top board of the fence. At the far end of the shady garden and deep under a wide-spreading tree had been the island of Robinson Crusoe. The perforated spout of an old sprinkling can had served them as the war-like cockle-shell in attacking and driving off the savages. The tall weeds had been taken prisoner and their long black heads decapitated. Several beetles, captives of the chase, their backs glistening in metallic blues and greens, rustled and stirred in the deep pail which was their prison. They had drawn deep lines in the sandy soil of the paths the better to mark the passing of

their armies in parade. Just now they had finished a victorious assault upon a grass-covered knoll in the field. As they stood there the setting sun covered them with a glorious fantasy of light.

A little tired they had established themselves on their conquered position and stood admiring the copse below them, a copse painted deep red, golden brown and purple by the stern brush of autumn.

—If I were Robinson Crusoe, he said, and you were my Man Friday, and if there were only a big seashore down there, then we could go and look for the footprints of cannibals in the sand.

She reflected for a moment and then asked:

—Did Robinson Crusoe beat Man Friday to make him obey?

—I don't remember that, he said, but together they fought off the villainous old Spaniards and the savages from the country of Man Friday.

—I am afraid that I don't care for such stories, she said. They are only games for boys to play at. It is almost dark and if we play at such games we will be afraid of the real stories.

—Real stories?

—Don't you believe in the Castle of the Ogre; the Ogre with the long teeth, and does he not come every evening just to the edge of the woods?

The little boy thought for a moment and then began to crunch his teeth.

—And when he had eaten the seven beautiful

little princesses he licked his chops and said: Gnam! Gnam! Gnam!

—No let's not play that, said the little girl; no one can be the Ogre or Tom Thumb, and anyway no one knows the name of the little princesses. If you wish, though, I will be the Sleeping Beauty of the Wood and you will come to waken me. But remember that you must kiss me quite hard. Oh! very hard. You can always tell a prince, you know, for they kiss so terribly hard.

He seemed timid and replied:

—I believe that it is too late to sleep in the grass. The Sleeping Beauty was on her bed in a castle surrounded by great bramble thickets which were filled with flowers.

—Then let us play Bluebeard, said the little girl. I will be your wife and you must forbid me to go into the little room. Now begin: You have just come to marry me.

—Sire, I do not know . . . your six wives have all disappeared in the most mysterious fashion. It is true that you have a beautiful bushy blue beard and that you live in a very splendid castle. You would never hurt me . . . never . . . never?

She implored him with her eyes.

—There now, you have asked my hand in marriage and my parents have agreed. And so: we are married. Now you must give me your keys.

—What does this pretty little key unlock?

—Now in a deep voice you must forbid me, for ever, to open that door.

—Now you have taken a great voyage and as soon as you left me I disobeyed you.

—Oh! Horrors! Six wives and he has killed them all! I fall and faint dead away and you come to hold me. Like that now. Come Bluebeard and call me in your deep voice.

—Sire, here are all the keys that you gave me.

—Now you must ask me what I have done with the little key.

—Sire, I do not know; I haven't touched it.

—Now you must yell out loud. What? Oh something, anything.

—Sire, forgive me, here it is, it hid itself at the very bottom of my pocket.

—Now you look at the key. There is a spot of blood on it.

—Yes, the little boy said, a spot of blood.

—I remember now, continued the little girl, I rubbed it, ever so hard but it wouldn't come off. Is it the blood of your six wives?

—My six wives!

—Yes, Bluebeard had killed his six wives, all of them. Why? Because they went into the little forbidden room. How did he kill them? He cut their throats and hung them up in the little black room. And the blood dripped from their feet and splashed on the floor. It was red blood and black blood, not like the blood of the poppies when I

slit them. Did they kneel before you, Bluebeard, so that you might cut their throats the more easily?

—Yes, they kneeled before me, the little boy answered.

—That will be so much fun, said the little girl. You will really and truly cut my throat? Yes?

—Yes! replied the little boy. But in the story Bluebeard did not kill his seventh wife.

—What difference does that make, said the little girl. But why didn't he cut off her head?

—Because her brothers came.

—But she was afraid? Yes?

—She was very frightened.

—And she cried?

—Yes and she called her sister Anne.

—But, Bluebeard, I will not cry.

—You must cry, said the little boy, for if you do not Bluebeard will have time enough to kill you. Your sister Anne is up in the tower looking out over the green plains and your brothers who are very strong musketeers are riding at full gallop to save you.

—I don't want to play it that way, cried the little girl. It is so dull as you tell it, and anyway I have no sister Anne. So you see!

She slowly came toward him.

—And my brothers will not come, said the girl. You must kill me, my little Bluebeard! Kill me! Kill me!

She knelt before him. He seized her hair and holding it free from her neck, raised his hand.

Slowly her eyes closed and her lashes quivered, the corners of her mouth twitched with a nervous smile. She bared the hair at the base of her head, her neck and her shoulders shook and voluptuously withdrew from the sharp edge of the cruel sword of Bluebeard.

—Oh . . . Oh! she cried, this will hurt!



THE PERVERSE

M^{ADGE!} The voice came through the little open doorway. Within, the great oaken shaft of the windmill rose from the floor and passed through the roof; it turned slowly and grumbled like an old man at work. The great cloth-covered sails of the mill revolved in their monotonous rhythm. Somewhere below two great stone beasts struggled and fought against each other so that the old mill groaned and trembled to its very base. Every five seconds a great long shadow cut across the room. The ladder which mounted to the loft was covered with flour dust.

—Madge, are you coming? The voice rose above the sounds of the mill.

Madge stood with her hand resting on the oaken shaft; a strange sensation came upon her as its vibration ran up her arm and then over her body. Through the doorway there stretched before her the great flat country. The hillock on which the mill stood was as bare as a shaven head. The four great sails as they turned swung close to the ground

and the long black shadows which they cast seemed to be ever in some futile pursuit of one another. Donkeys unnumbered had scratched their flanks against the poorly cemented walls while their masters had waited for flour, until now the plaster had worn away and left exposed the great gray foundation stones of the mill. At the base of the knoll, a roadway marked by dry and hardened wagon ruts led to a large pond where flame-red flowers grew.

—Madge, we are leaving now! came the voice.

—Well, leave then, Madge replied under her breath.

The door of the mill screeched as some vagrant breeze swung it farther open. Madge watched the donkey's long flapping ears as it tentatively nibbled the short grass. A huge flour sack was slung across its back. The old miller and his son poked the donkey from behind and set off down the rutted road. Madge remained alone.

* * * * *

When her parents had found her one night lying on her face stretched out across her couch, her mouth filled with sand and charcoal they had called in the village doctors. Their advice had been to send Madge into the country where she would work hard each day, so hard that in the evenings she would be too tired to think of such things. However, since she had returned to the mill she had fled

every morning at daybreak up into the loft where she watched the great turning sails for hours on end.

* * * * *

There was a creak and a clatter as some one raised the latch of the great mill door, and Madge shivered from head to foot in nervous excitement.

—Who is there? she called down from the loft.

—May I have a drink? I am very thirsty, a feeble voice answered her.

It was but an old beggar of the countryside. Deep in his pack Madge could see a loaf of bread.

—It is too bad that he is not hungry as well, Madge thought.

She liked beggars as she liked toads, beetles and slimy white worms; they all fascinated her with some unknown horror.

—Wait a moment! she called down.

She descended from the loft and stood before the old man.

—You are very old, she said, and you are very thirsty?

—Yes, my good child, answered the old man.

—Beggars are always hungry, Madge said, and I like to help them. Wait a moment.

She pulled a flake of plaster from the wall and nibbled at it thoughtfully for a moment.

—No one is here and I have no glass but there is a pump in the yard.

She pointed to the curved iron handle above the well. While the old man pumped and held his mouth under the spout Madge slyly took the loaf of bread from his sack and hid it in a pile of flour.

But the old man got no water from the well for it was dry and when he returned to Madge she said:

—Down the hill there is a large pond. The poor may drink there.

—Though we are poor we are not animals, the old man replied.

—No, said Madge, but you are as unfortunate. If you are hungry I will steal a cup of flour and give it to you. Then this evening with water from the pond you will be able to make some dough for your supper.

—Unbaked dough! said the old beggar. Thank you, child, but a kind person has to-day given me a loaf of bread.

—And what would you do if you had not the bread? If I were as old as you, my poor man, I would drown myself. Those who have drowned themselves are very happy. It is a lovely death! I pity you, old man.

—God be with you, child, said the old beggar and as he turned to go down the hill, he muttered in his wavering voice, as if to himself: "I am so very weary."

—You will be hungry to-night, Madge cried after him. You will be hungry, old man. If your

teeth are bad you must dip your bread in the water of the pond. It is very, very deep.

Madge listened to the last echoes of his footsteps and when they had passed she took the loaf of bread from the pile of flour and looked at it. It was black bread from some poor peasant hut; now it was spotted white with the flour.

—Pouf! she said. If I were poor I would steal good white bread from the bakeries.

* * * * *

When the miller returned he found Madge lying with her head on some flour sacks. Close in her arms she clutched the loaf of bread, her eyes bulged, her cheeks seemed fallen in and the scarlet tip of her tongue hung between her tightly closed teeth as she imitated what she thought a drowned person must look like.

After they had eaten supper Madge asked her father:

—Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, was there not an enormous giant who lived in this mill and who made his bread from the bones of dead men?

—That is only a fairy-story, her father said. But under the hill on which this mill is built there are caves cut from the solid rock, and a society from the city wants to buy my land and dig out these caves. Perhaps some day I will tear down my mill and sell the land to these people; then they

may poke about to their hearts' delight among these old tombs and caves. They should find enough old bones to keep them busy for a long time.

—Bones grind easily? Yes? The bones of the dead . . . ? said Madge. More easily than wheat, father? And the giant made very good bread from the dust of the bones and he ate the bread—yes, he ate it.

The young boy Jean shrugged his shoulders. The turmoil of the mill slowly ceased. The wind no longer turned the great sails. The great stone beasts ceased to struggle and pressed silently each against the other.

—Jean told me a long time ago, continued Madge, that with a loaf of bread and quicksilver the bodies of drowned people can be found again. You make a little hole in the loaf of bread and pour some quicksilver into it and then throw it into the water and it will come to rest above the body of the drowned person.

—What should I know of all this? the father answered. And anyway, young lady, these are not things for a girl of your age to be occupying her mind with. What stories to tell a girl, Jean!

—But Madge asked me about these things, replied the boy.

—There is no quicksilver here, said Madge, so I will put a leaden bullet in this loaf of bread and perhaps I will find a drowned person in the pond.

Seated before the mill door Madge awaited the coming of evening. Under her apron she concealed the beggar's loaf of bread with a little leaden bullet imbedded in it. The old beggar surely must have become hungry and then drowned himself in the pond. She would find his body, and like the giant, she would grind her flour and knead her dough with the bones of a dead man.



THE SAVAGE

JUST after daybreak Bouchette's father led her into the forest. While he felled a large tree she sat near to him and with fascination she watched the ax bite deep into the wood, showering a fine hail of chips and bark: sometimes the moss-covered bark flew farther than she thought it could and the little fragments would brush against her face. Timber! her father cried as the great oak began to sway and then with a subterranean rumble and loud crackling, slowly fell to the ground. Bouchette was a little sad when she saw the forest monster stretched out in the clearing, its branches wounded and shattered.

In the evening there shone through the deep shadows a burning circle where the little turf-covered charcoal mounds flamed in the darkness. It was time, Bouchette knew, to open the wicker basket and to set out for her father the little stone jug of wine and the loaf of brown bread. He lay back upon the deep pile of broken branches and ate slowly. Bouchette had her supper when they re-

turned home. Now she ran here and there through the trees marked to be cut, and if she thought that her father had not been watching her she hid behind the trunk of one of the larger ones suddenly to spring out and cry: Boo!

Near by there was a dark cave which the people of the country-side called Sainte-Marie-Gueule-de-Loup. The entrance to this cavern was choked with brambles and from its deep passages one could ever hear great rumbling echoes. Standing on her very tiptoes Bouchette would examine the cavern from some considerable distance.

One morning in late autumn when the frost-burned trees of the forest were still bathed in the soft rosy light of early dawn, Bouchette saw something green moving before the cave of the Gueule-de-Loup. It had arms and legs and a head and appeared to be a little girl about Bouchette's size and age.

Bouchette was afraid to approach the little green girl. She did not dare even to call out to her father. She thought that this was one of the strange people who answered when one called down into the black hole of the Gueule-de-Loup. She closed her eyes, fearing to stir from the spot and half awaited some sinister attack. While she stood thus she heard a faint sob near at hand. The strange little green thing wept. Then Bouchette opened her eyes and she was sorry for the little

girl. She looked intently at her green face, sweet and sad and wet with tears and the two nervous little green hands which pressed against the throat of this extraordinary child.

—Perhaps she has fallen and the grass and trees have stained her hands and face, Bouchette muttered to herself.

With a childish courage she crossed the fern-clustered brake until she stood beside this singular person. Two little green arms stretched out to Bouchette through the withered brambles.

—She is like me, save for her curious color, Bouchette thought.

The weeping little creature was half dressed in a sort of tunic made from forest leaves sewn together. It was truly a little girl but a little girl of the shade and color of some exotic wild plant. Bouchette imagined that her feet must be deep rooted like a tree in the ground. But this was not so for she moved slightly.

Bouchette caressed her and ran her hands through the little creature's hair and took her by the hand. The little green thing, still weeping, allowed herself to be led away by Bouchette. She seemed not to know how to speak.

—My good God! A green devil! cried Bouchette's father, when he saw this little creature. Where do you come from, my child? Why are you green? And then because of her silence. Can you not speak?

Bouchette and her father could not tell if the little green child had heard them.

—Perhaps she is hungry, said the woodsman, and he offered the child some of his bread and the stone jar of wine. She turned the bread about in her hands and then let it fall to the ground; the stone jar she shook that she might listen to the gurgling sound of the wine.

Bouchette begged her father not to leave the poor creature in the forest during the night. The little turf-covered charcoal mounds gleamed one by one in the early evening and the little green child trembled as she saw their flames. When she entered the humble cottage where Bouchette lived she fled from the candle flames. She could never accustom herself to fire and whenever any one lighted a lamp she uttered a cry of terror.

When Bouchette's mother saw this strange child she crossed herself: God help me, she said, if she be a demon, and demon she must be for of a certain she is not a Christian.

The little green child would touch neither bread nor salt nor wine, and from this it could be clearly seen that she had neither been baptized nor had she ever received the communion. The curé was sent for and he crossed the threshold of the cottage just as Bouchette was offering the little green child some raw unshucked beans.

The child seemed very happy, and with her finger-nails she slit open the first pod which came to

her hands. By chance this pod was empty, and thinking herself deceived the little girl began to cry again until Bouchette opened a full pod for her. For some time she sat there in the firelight nibbling the beans and watching the priest.

Later they brought in the village schoolmaster, but he could not make her understand a single human word, nor pronounce a single articulate sound. She wept and she laughed and she uttered strange and unintelligible noises.

The curé examined her very carefully, but he could discern nowhere on her body any mark of the demon. On the following Sunday she was taken to the church but she manifested no signs of inquietude save that she moaned when she was sprinkled with holy water. She did not recoil before the image of Christ upon the Cross, but as she passed her hands over the wounds upon the Holy Body and the cruel marks of the crown of thorns she seemed afflicted with a deep sorrow.

The people of the village were very curious about her; and some of them feared her. Despite the commands of their curé they always spoke of her as the "Green Devil."

She ate only fruit and the seeds of things, and whenever any one handed her an ear of corn or a stalk she broke them open and finding nothing she would weep from disappointment. Bouchette could never seem to teach her where to find the grains of

wheat or the cherries and her self-deceptions and disappointments were ever the same. Imitating Bouchette, she soon learned to carry the wood and water, to sweep the floor of the little cottage, to help with the washing and even to sew, though indeed she could never touch cloth without a little shudder of aversion. But she would never light the fire, nor for that matter would she ever approach close to the hearth.

* * * * *

When Bouchette grew up and her parents wished to hire her out in service she grieved, and in the evening with her head hidden under her bed-clothes she wept softly. The little green girl looked with piteous eyes upon her poor little friend. In the morning she watched the great sad eyes of Bouchette and her own eyes filled with tears. In the night when Bouchette wept she felt a soft hand brushing through her hair and cool lips pressing against her cheek.

The last evening before Bouchette was to go away and while her father and mother slept, the little green girl caressed her weeping friend and took her by the hand. She opened the cottage door and stretched her arm forth into the night. As long before when Bouchette had led her to the houses of men, the little green child now led Bouchette by the hand toward some unknown liberty which lay beyond the night.

THE FAITHFUL

JEANIE's lover had gone away to sea, and she was alone, all alone. She wrote a letter and sealed it with her little finger and threw it among the long red rushes of the narrow river. So would it be borne to the sea. Jeanie did not really know how to write; but her sailor lad would understand that it was a love-letter. For a long time she awaited an answer; but the answer never came. There was no little river to bear a message from the sea to the village where Jeanie lived.

One day Jeanie went away to search for her lover. She looked at the water-lilies with their bending stalks, and all the flowers seemed to beckon her onward. And Jeanie said, as she walked along:

—On the sea there is a ship—in the ship there is a room—in the room there is a cage—in the cage there is a bird—in the bird there is a heart—in the heart there is a letter—in the letter there is written: I love Jeanie. I love Jeanie is in the letter—the letter is in the heart—the heart is in the bird—the bird is in the cage—the cage is in the

room—the room is in the ship—the ship is far away upon the ocean.

As Jeanie did not fear men, dusty millers seeing her simple and sweet and with a gold ring on her finger offered her bread and giving her a floury kiss allowed her to sleep upon the sacks of flour.

So she crossed the country of the dun-colored rocks, and the country of the low forests, and the broad meadows bordering the river near the cities. Many of those who harbored Jeanie kissed her; but she never gave those kisses back—for disloyal kisses given by lovers are deeply marked on their cheeks by dark red spots of blood.

At last she came to the seaport where her lover had embarked. Along the water-front she searched for the name of his vessel but she could not find it, and Jeanie thought that the ship must have been sent across the sea to the Americas.

Twisting black streets descended to the quays from the heights of the city. Certain of them were paved and in the middle had narrow gutters through which trickled water, others were only narrow stairways made from ancient flagstones.

Here and there Jeanie noticed houses which were painted yellow and blue and decorated with pictures of negro women and strange unfamiliar red birds. In the evening large lanterns swayed before their doors and one saw going into them men who seemed drunken.

Jeanie thought that these were the inns and taverns for sailors returning from the far countries of black women and colorful birds, and she wanted to await her lover in one of these houses where perhaps one might smell strange odors brought from over the far seas.

Raising her head she saw the white faces of women who leaned against the grilled windows seeking a breath of the cool clean air from the harbor. Jeanie pushed her way through the swinging doorway of one of these houses and found herself in a large room paved with square red tiles and peopled with half-naked women cloaked in rose-red kimonos. At the far end of the room a parrot slowly blinked his eyes. On a table in one corner were three tall glasses in which there remained a few drops of some effervescing liquid.

Four women gathered about her and Jeanie perceived another dressed in black who sewed in a little cubby-hole of an office.

—She is from the country, said one of the women.

—Hush! said another. Of course she is!

Then all of them asked:

—Will you have something to drink, little one?

As Jeanie slowly sipped from one of the tall thin glasses the ring on her raised hand shone and one of the women said:

—She is married!

And then they asked her :

—Are you married, little one?

Jeanie blushed for she did not really know whether she was married or not nor how she should answer.

—These husbands! I know them, said one of the women. When I was little we were poor, and when I was seven years old I did not even own a dress. All naked I went into the woods to build my church—and all the little birds helped me! There was a vulture who lugged the stones and a pigeon with a sharp beak who carved them, a bullfinch played the organ. There was I married and there was read my wedding mass.

—But perhaps this child is only engaged? said another of the women. Yes?

And then they asked her :

—It is true then you are only engaged?

Then they kissed Jeanie one after the other and put their arms about her and held her close and even the old woman in the little office smiled.

All this while a violin had been playing before the doorway and, lulled by its soft music, Jeanie became sleepy. Two women led her up the narrow stairway to a little room under the eaves and laid her gently on the bed.

Then they said :

—We must give her something. But what can we give her?

And while they talked the parrot wakened and broke the silence with his shrill chattering.

—I will tell you, said one.

And she spoke for some moments in a subdued voice. When she had finished one of the women brushed tears from her eyes.

—It is true, she said, we have had no happiness and perhaps this will bring us good fortune.

—Yes, good fortune! And she will have what we four have not had, said another.

* * * * *

The next day when Jeanie departed from this house she wore on each finger of her left hand an engagement ring. Her love was far away but with her five gold rings she would beat upon his heart to waken his love again.



THE PREDESTINED

FROM the day that Elsie was tall enough she would stand every morning before her mirror and say: "Good morning my little Ilsée." Then she would purse her lips and kiss the cold glass. The girl in the glass always seemed to come toward Elsie. In reality she was very far away. Ilsée, ever more pale than Elsie, raised herself from the depths of the glass, a prisoner with frozen lips. Elsie pitied her for she seemed so sad and grievous. Each morning her smile was like a sallow dawn haunted by some nocturnal horror.

Nevertheless Elsie loved and talked to her friend:

—No one but I ever says good morning to you, my poor little Ilsée. Kiss me! To-day we will go for a long walk, Ilsée. My lover will come for us, and you will walk with us.

Elsie turned away, and the little Ilsée fled into the shadows of the mirror.

Elsie showed the girl in the mirror her dolls and her dresses.

—Play with me, and show me your dresses, she said.

Ilsée seemed jealous, but lifted her dolls for Elsie to see, and they were pale; her dresses, and they were discolored. Ilsée never spoke; she seemed content only to move her lips when Elsie talked to her.

Sometimes Elsie was fretful and like a little child became angry with the silent Ilsée.

—Naughty, wicked, Ilsée! she would cry. Will you not answer me? Will you not kiss me?

At such times she would beat with her hands against the mirror, and a strange hand, which seemed attached to no body, would appear before Elsie's hand. Never could Elsie touch the girl in the mirror.

But always during the night Elsie would forgive the girl of the mirror, and in the morning, happy to find her friend again, she would jump from her bed to kiss her and to murmur: "Good morning, my little Ilsée."

When Elsie became engaged she brought her betrothed to the mirror and said to Ilsée: "This is my lover. You may look at him, but you must not look at him too long. He is mine, but I want you to see him. When we are married I will let you kiss him with me every morning."

Elsie's lover laughed and the Ilsée in the mirror smiled also.

—Is he not handsome this man that I love?
asked Elsie.

—Yes! Yes! Ilsée seemed to say as her head
nodded in the mirror.

—If you look at him too long I will never kiss
you again, said Elsie. I am quite as jealous as you,
my friend. Good-by, my little Ilsée.

* * * * *

In the same measure that Elsie learned love
and happiness, Ilsée became sad, for her friend no
longer came to kiss her in the morning. She was
forgotten. Elsie no longer looked at the girl in the
mirror but her fiancé saw her.

—Oh! said Elsie. You no longer think of me,
villain. You can only see Ilsée. She is a prisoner;
she will never come to you. She is jealous of you;
but I am more jealous than she. Do not look at
her, my love, look at me instead. Wicked Ilsée of
the mirror, I forbid you to speak to my love. You
can not go to him; you never can be with him. Do
not take him from me, wicked girl. When we are
married you may kiss him with me. Laugh, Ilsée.
You will be with us.

* * * * *

Elsie became jealous of the girl in the mirror.
On the days when her betrothed did not come to see
her she would cry out: "You have driven him away,
you have frightened him away with your ugly face.
Wicked Ilsée!"

Elsie tacked a piece of soft white linen over the mirror and just before she hammered in the last little nail she lifted a corner of the cloth and said: "Good-by, little Ilsée of the mirror."

Yet even with the Ilsée of the mirror shut away Elsie's lover seemed estranged. "He no longer loves me," thought Elsie, "he comes no more, and I am all alone. Where is Ilsée? Has she gone away with him?"

With her gold scissors Elsie snipped a little hole in the cloth and looked deep into the mirror. She saw only a white shadow. She has gone away, thought Elsie.

* * * * *

—I must be patient, Elsie said to herself, or the Ilsée of the mirror will be jealous and sad. I will wait and my lover will come back to me.

Each morning Elsie, half-asleep, seemed to see the head of her fiancé on the pillow beside her face. "Oh, my love," she would murmur, "you have come back to me? My dear one." . . . Her hand ever stretched out, to touch only the empty sheet.

—I must be very patient, Elsie said to herself.

* * * * *

A long time Elsie awaited her fiancé, until her patience melted into tears. Her face became lined with wrinkles. Each day, each month, each year had left its mark upon her.

—Oh, my love, said Elsie, I begin to doubt.

Elsie cut the linen cover she had tacked over the mirror; beyond the pallid frame appeared the glass hidden behind deep stains. The mirror was furrowed with translucent lines, and here and there where the silver backing had fallen away she saw only deep shadowy lakes.

Ilsée stood behind the glass. Like Elsie she was dressed in black, and her face was thin and drawn and marked and spotted by those blind patches of the mirror which did not reflect. The mirror seemed to have wept.

—You are sad even as I am sad, said Elsie.

The woman in the mirror wept and Elsie kissed her and said: "Good-by, my poor little Ilsée."

Upon going into her room with her lamp in her hand, Elsie was surprised for Ilsée, a lamp in her hand, came through the doorway toward her, and she seemed sad. Elsie placed her lamp on a little shelf above her bed. Ilsée placed her lamp there likewise and sat beside Elsie.

—I understand now, thought Elsie. The Ilsée of the mirror has been delivered. She has come to look for me. I am going to die,



THE DREAMER

AFTER the death of her parents Marjolaine remained in their small cottage with her old nurse. She was heiress to little more than a brown thatched roof and a huge fireplace; her father had been only a teller of stories and a fashioner of dreams. Some one, befriending his beautiful ideas, had allowed him the use of some land and lent him money for his fancies. So for a long time Marjolaine's father had mixed various kinds of potter's clay with metallic dust in his vain attempts to create a perfect enamel. He had tried to melt and to gild glass in his search for strange and fanciful effects.

Of all his labors there remained only two black crucibles, some dented and badly corroded brass plaques, and seven large clay jars which stood in the corner beside the fireplace. Marjolaine's mother, a pious woman of the countryside, owned nothing when she died: she had sold even her silver chaplet to buy potter's clay for the man who had been her husband.

Marjolaine's father had worn a green apron,

his hands were ever caked with clay and his eyes were flecked with red from gazing too long and too intently into his kiln. Ever seated by his side Marjolaine grew up. She admired the seven jars beside the chimney, glazed and darkened with smoke; they were always mysterious, like to hollow and undulated rainbows.

Morgiane had made a glistening brigand bearing a great sword covered with the flowers of Damascus leap from the blood-red jar. In the orange jar one could, like Aladdin, find pomegranates fashioned from rubies, and plums from amethysts, and cherries from garnets, and quinces from topazes, and grapes from opals, and little white berries made from diamonds. The great yellow jar was filled with the gold-dust which Camaralzaman had hidden under the olives. One of the olives could be faintly seen through the translucent neck of this jar. The green jar was sealed with a green copper disk marked and placed there by King Solomon. Age had deposited on it a deep layer of verdigris; for this jar had once lain on the ocean bottom, and for many thousands of years it had held prisoner a genie who was in reality a prince. Some day a young girl with the name of Marjolaine would be told the secret of the jar by the mandrakes to whom King Solomon had given his voice and just in the moment of the full moon she would break the enchantment which held the young

prince prisoner. In the light blue jar Giauhare had packed away her ocean robes, woven from seaweed, jeweled with aquamarines and dyed with the deep purple made by the shell-fish. All the sky of earthly Paradise, and the rich fruit from the tree of the Garden of Eden and the flaming scales of the serpent, and the burning sword of the angel of God were closed in the dark blue jar which was as an enormous cup azured like some astral flower. In the last jar the mysterious Lilith had poured all of the sky of Heaven that she might ever dress herself in the deep rich violet of a bishop's cardinal.

One unaware of all these mysteries saw only seven old and discolored jars standing in the corner beside the fireplace. Marjolaine, however, knew the truth from the stories that her father had told her as they sat before the fire on winter evenings. Hemmed in by the eerie ever-changing shadows cast from the hearth and the flickering candles Marjolaine used to follow with her eyes these swarming marvels until the hour of bedtime.

Finally, however, the day came when the kneading trough was empty of bread and there was no more salt in the house. The old nurse implored Marjolaine:

—You should marry, my little loved one, she said. Your mother thought of Jean; would you like to marry Jean? Ma Jolaine, Ma Jolaine, what a lovely wife you will make!

—I will marry a prince, replied the dreamer.

—Princess Marjolaine, begged the old nurse, marry Jean and make him your prince.

—Certainly not, said the dreamer; I will wait with my diamonds and my robes for the beautiful genie. In the meantime we will live by my spinning. Buy me some flax, some bobbins and a spinning-wheel. Soon we will have our palace. Just now it is in a black desert in Africa. For the moment a magician covered with blood and poisons lives in it. He pours a dark brown powder into his guests' wine which changes them into shaggy-haired beasts. The place is lighted with great flaming torches and the negroes who bear in the banquet feasts wear crowns of gold. My prince will kill the magician and the palace will be transported into our country and you will be the nurse and rock the cradle of my baby.

—O Marjolaine, marry Jean and forget these dreams, said the old nurse.

Marjolaine sat at her spinning. Patiently she turned the wheel and twisted and untwisted the flax. The bobbins emptied and filled. Jean came often and sat beside Marjolaine, admiring her, but she paid no attention to him because of the seven dream-filled jars which stood beside the fireplace. During the day she believed that she heard them lament or sometimes sing. But when she stopped spinning, the bobbins no longer murmured for the jars and the spinning-wheel ceased to carry their sighing.

—O Marjolaine, marry Jean, the old nurse begged her every night.

At midnight the dreaming girl often rose from her bed and like Morgiane in the story threw a handful of sand against the jars to waken the mysteries. But the brigand ever continued to sleep; the precious fruits of jewels never jingled against one another, nor could she hear the trickle of the gold dust or the susurrus of the silken robes nor did the copper seal of Solomon weigh any less heavily upon the imprisoned prince.

Marjolaine would throw the grains of sand one after the other. Seven times would they tinkle against the hard clay of the jars; and seven times would utter silence fall over the room.

—O Marjolaine, marry Jean, the old nurse begged her every morning.

* * * * *

Marjolaine frowned when she saw Jean, and finally Jean ceased to come to her cottage. Early one morning the old nurse died, and when Marjolaine saw her there was a frozen smile on her aged dead face. Marjolaine dressed in black and bound her hair with a somber ribbon and continued to spin.

Every night she got up from her couch, and, like Morgiane, she threw grains of sand against the clay jars to waken the imprisoned mysteries. But

the dreams and fancies which lay hidden away in the magic jars slept on for ever.

* * * * *

In her hope and patience Marjolaine grew old, but the prince imprisoned under the seal of Solomon was ever young, having lain there already these thousands of years. One night when the moon was full the dreaming Marjolaine crept from her bed like an assassin; in her hand she carried a small hammer. Like a mad thing she broke six of the clay jars. One by one the vases cracked and then slowly fell upon the floor in fragments: they were empty, and the pain of agony swept over her. Before the last jar she hesitated, the jar in which Lilith had poured the deep blue of Heaven; then she destroyed even that one as she had destroyed the others. From the scattered débris there fell a rose of Jericho, withered and gray. When Marjolaine picked the rose from the floor it crumbled into dust in her hands.



THE ROMANTIC

CICE drew up her legs in her little bed and turned her face toward the wall. Through the window there shone a faint pale light. The wall vibrated and seemed to sleep with a slow and regular respiration. Her little dress was draped over a chair and below dangled a pair of stockings like two legs, but dark, slack and empty. Her coat hung against the wall and seemed in the darkness as if it were trying to clamber up toward the ceiling of the small room. The old floor boards groaned feebly in the night. On the dressing-table in the corner a pot of water in the damp and shadowy hand-basin looked for all the world like a crouching white toad.

—I am too unhappy, said Cice. And she began to cry into her pillow. The wall sighed again and this time deeply; the two black legs remained inert but the dress collapsed as the wind ceased to blow through it, and the crouching white toad did not close its humid mouth.

—No one wants me, Cice said. My sisters are

loved, but I am not for I have been sent to bed without my supper. I will go away. I will run very far away from all of them. I am a Cinderella, that is who I am. I will show them—all of them. I will marry a prince but they will never have any one to marry. I will come back to visit them in my beautiful carriage; that is what I will do. Then, if they are good, perhaps I will forgive them. Poor Cinderella, they will soon know that you are better than they.

Her little heart beat madly as she slipped on her stockings and drew her dress down over her head. The small chair stood empty and abandoned in the middle of the room.

Cice quietly descended the stairway to the kitchen and kneeling before the hearth, her hands deep in the cold ashes, she began to weep again.

A soft purring noise startled her and a warm velvet body brushed against her, seeming to caress her legs.

—I have no fairy godmother, said Cice, but I have my cat. Have I not, dear one?

She stretched out her hand and the warm tongue of the little animal lightly lapped her fingers.

—Come, said Cice.

She pushed open the door which led into the garden and a gust of cool night air blew in upon her. The greensward, a somber stain, lay before

her in the night; the great sycamore in front of the cottage trembled in the wind and the stars in the heavens seemed suspended from its long sweeping branches. Beneath the tree she could distinguish the little kitchen garden where in the faint light there gleamed the great glass forcing bells.

Cice bent back a little shrub which brushed against her and tickled her legs, and ran out among the glass bells where the reflections of the stars glimmered like so many dancing little lights.

—I have no fairy godmother: kitten, do you know how to make a carriage? she asked.

The little beast raised its head and yawned. Above in the sky little gray clouds chased across the heavens.

—I have not even a prince, said Cice. When do you think he will come, my cat?

Seated beside a great purple thistle she regarded the garden hedge. Then taking off one of her slippers she threw it with all her might far above and over the row of currant bushes. The slipper landed in the middle of the roadway.

Cice caressed her cat and said:

—Listen, my cat. If the prince does not bring back my slipper to me, I will buy you a set of boots and we will voyage all over the world to find him. He is very young and he dresses in green and wears many diamonds. He loves me dearly, but he has never seen me. You will not be jealous. We will all live together, all three of us. And I will be hap-

pier than Cinderella because I have been more unhappy than she. Cinderella went to balls every evening and she had beautiful rich dresses. I, I have only you, my dear little cat.

Cice kissed the cat's damp little nose. The cat miauled feebly and tentatively touched her ear with its paw. Then it licked itself and began to purr.

Cice gathered a handful of unripened green currants.

—One for me, one for my prince, one for you. One for my prince, one for you, one for me. One for you, one for me, one for my prince. That is the way we will live. We will divide everything we have among the three of us and we will not have any wicked sisters about.

* * * * *

The clouds had gathered and banked in the heavens and to the east there shone the faint pale roseate glow of dawn. The trees seemed drenched in some livid eerie half-light. A gust of cold wind blew against Cice's legs and under her dress. Everything was suddenly chilled. The stalk of the purple thistle bent far over under the force of the wind. The cat arched itself and the hair raised all along its back.

From far down the road Cice heard the grumbling, grating sound of carriage wheels.

A wan streak of reddish light showed behind the fringe of the trees and just over the thatched ridge-pole of the little cottage.

Then as the carriage approached there could be heard the whinnying of the horses and a confused murmur of men's voices.

—Listen, kitty, said Cice. Listen. A great carriage is coming. It is the carriage of my prince. Quick, quick. He is going to call to me.

A little slipper of reddish brown leather flew through the air far over the currant bushes and landed beyond the road in a clump of thistles.

Cice ran toward the wicket gate and opened it.

A long dark carriage slowly advanced. In the little lamps beside the coachman's box there burned the tiny red flames of two quivering candles. Two men in black marched on either side of the horses. The carriage itself seemed to be shaped like a long black coffin and a heavy odor hung upon the dawn wind.

But Cice did not understand any of this. She saw only one thing: the marvelous carriage was before her. The coachman of the prince wore a gold embroidered hat. The heavy coffer beneath was filled with the marriage jewels. The sovereign and terrible perfume which hung upon the air was only that which surrounded the persons of royalty.

And Cice reached forth her little arms and cried:

—Take me away! Oh, take me away, my prince!

THE INSENSIBLE

THE Princess Morgane loved no one. Hers was a frank ingenuousness and she preferred to live among her flowers and her mirrors. She amused herself by putting red roses into her hair and then looking into one of her many mirrors. Since she but mirrored herself in the regard of others she never saw either young men or young women. Cruelty and voluptuousness were unknown to her. Her black hair fell about her face like a shadowy veil and hung between her and the rest of the world. She desired only to love herself, but the reflection of herself which she saw in her mirrors was frigidly calm and distant; her image on pools and lakes was sad and pale and her image upon the surface of streams and running water was elusive and trembling.

The Princess Morgane had read in history books of the famous mirror of the little Snow White which could speak and wherein one might foretell one's death. She knew the story of the mirror of Elsie, and Ilsée who had come from

the mirror and killed her friend. She knew the adventures of the terrible mirror of Miletus which caused the Milesians to strangle themselves as the night faded into dawn. She had seen the mysterious painting in which the lover holds a naked sword before his betrothed to protect her because in the dusk of the evening, while walking, they had come upon their own specters: and doubles are ever the sign of impending death. Yet despite this Morgane did not fear her own image for she had never seen herself cruel or voluptuous but always candid and veiled. The great sheets of polished green gold and the heavy liquid surfaces of bright silver never quite revealed Morgane to Morgane.

The priests of her country were geomancers and worshipers of fire. They would put sand into a square shallow box and there trace cabalistic lines; by means of their parchment talismans they could predict the future and calculate events which were yet to occur, and they possessed a great black smoky mirror. One evening Morgane resorted to the priests, and as an offering to the Gods she threw three little cakes into the sacred fire.

—Look, said the geomancer and he held before Morgane a mirror whose surface was limpid black.

Morgane looked deep into this mirror and soon a clear vapor seemed to rise from its surface. There appeared a golden circle of light and then

an image came into her vision which ran lightly and soon disappeared. Then she saw a square white house with long windows and under the third window there hung a great bronze ring. And all about the house there was nothing but desolation and a waste of gray sand.

—There, said the geomancer, is the hidden place where the mirror of truth will be found; but our science can tell you no more—neither where this place is nor how to explain all this that you have seen.

Morgane peered even more intently and threw three more cakes into the fire, but the image trembled before her eyes and then became obscure; the square white house vanished and Morgane found herself looking vainly into an empty black mirror.

The day following, Morgane wished to set forth in search of the place she had seen in the black mirror. It seemed to her that she remembered the dismal color of the sand and so she departed and her course was that of the sun. Her father gave her a rich caravan, with mules belled in silver and Morgane was carried in a litter whose sides were lined with precious and famous mirrors.

Thus Morgane crossed Persia, and she examined all the houses she saw in the desert's isolation as well as those built near the oases; houses where bands of travelers stopped and houses of which men spoke ill wherein women sang through the

night and beat musically upon pieces of metal the while.

Near the border of the kingdom of Persia she saw square white houses with long windows but never did she see a bronze ring hung from one of them, but she was told that the house with the ring would be found in the Christian country of Syria farther to the west.

Morgane passed the level banks of the river which bordered the country of the great marshes where the licorice forests are believed to be. Here she saw strongholds carved from single rocks. And in the sunlight beside the path of the caravan women sat with twisted cords of reddish hair bound across their foreheads. These were the people who capture the great bands of wild horses and whose lances are tipped with silver points.

Farther along this way there was a mountain inhabited by brigands who drank, in the honor of their gods, strong liquors made from wheat. They lasciviously worshiped great green stones of a curious shape and within circles of burning brush they practised an obscene ritual of prostitution. Morgane greatly feared these people.

Still farther along this way was a subterranean city of black men who were only visited by their gods while they slept. These people chewed the fibers of hemp and covered their faces with powdery white chalk. During the night those who became drunken

with the hemp rove the necks of those who slept that they might send them to their nocturnal divinities. Morgane greatly feared these people.

Even still farther along this way was the desert of gray sand where the plants and all that grew, and the rocks and all that was, were of the same gray color as the sand. At the edge of the desert Morgane found the square white house of the bronze ring.

She had her litter lowered to the ground, and the mule-drivers unloaded the mules. It was an ancient house built without the use of cement and the blocks of stone were whitened by the sun. However, the owner of the house could tell Morgane nothing of the mirror for he had never heard of it.

In the evening, after they had eaten of their scanty store of thin wafers the owner of the house told Morgane that the house of the bronze ring in ancient times had been the palace of a cruel queen, but that she had been punished for her cruelty. She had ordered that her people cut off the head of an old religious who lived alone in the great desert and who with many good words was wont to bathe the feet of travelers, in his stream. Soon after this was done the cruel queen perished and with her, all her race. The chamber of this queen had been walled up, but the owner of the house showed the Princess Morgane the doorway blocked with great stones.

Toward the middle of the night and after the travelers had retired the Princess Morgane woke her mule-drivers and bade them break down the wall across the doorway of the ancient queen's chamber. And with a small iron lamp in her hand she entered through the powdery breach which they had made.

The servants of Morgane, hearing a cry, quickly followed the princess. She was kneeling in the middle of the room before a hammered copper basin filled with blood and in the basin she peered with ardent attention. The owner of the house raised his arms in prayer and horror. For in the closed room the blood in the basin had not evaporated since the cruel queen had placed there the head of the old religious.

No one knows what the Princess Morgane saw in the mirror of blood, but along the way of her return her muleteers, their gray faces turned toward the heavens, were found assassinated one by one, each night, after they had entered her litter. Later people called the Princess Morgane, *Morgane le Rouge*, and she was known as a famous prostitute and a terrible slaughterer of men.



THE SELFLESS

LILY and Nan were servants on the farm. They carried water from the well up the bramble-bordered path to the house. Often in the winter when it was cold and icicles hung from the windows Lily came to sleep with Nan. And curled up under the covers she would listen to the wind howl about the house. They always had little white cloths in their apron pockets and fine blouses with cerise-colored ribbons. Every evening before they went to bed they put in the corner beside the hearth a wooden bucket filled with fresh water. Some one had told them that did they do this then when they got up in the morning they would find pieces of silver in the bucket which they might click in their hands; for the Pixies after they have bathed always leave a piece of silver in the tub to thank those who have been thoughtful of them. But neither Nan nor Lily nor, for that matter, any one, save in fairy-stories and ballads, had ever seen the Pixies, the wicked little people with their crooked tails.

One night Nan forgot to draw a bucket of

fresh water; it was in December and the long chain of the pump which came up over the wheel was frozen fast and hung with ice.

As she slept with her arms about Lily's neck she was suddenly pinched high on her shoulder and far down on the calves of her legs, and the hair at the base of her neck was cruelly pulled. She wakened and began to weep and said:

—To-morrow I shall be black and blue! And turning to Lily she whispered: Hold me, hold me tightly: I forgot to put out a bucket of fresh water to-night; but I will not get out of bed for all the Pixies in Devonshire.

Then the good little Lily kissed her and got up and drew a bucket of water and set it in the corner beside the hearth. When she returned to her bed she discovered that Nan was already asleep.

* * * * *

While she slept Lily had a dream. It seemed to her that a queen dressed in green leaves, and with a crown of gold upon her head, approached her couch, touched her and spoke to her in this wise:

—I am the Queen Mandragora and you must come to me, Lily. And she said: I am seated in a field of emeralds, and the road which will bring you to me is of three colors, brown, blue and green. And she said: I am the Queen Mandragora; and you must come to me, Lily.

Then a black mist fell about Lily and she saw

nothing more and slept quietly all the rest of the night. In the morning when the cock crowed Nan could not get up, and she lay in her bed softly moaning. Her legs were without feeling and she could not move them at all. During the day doctors came to see her and after a long consultation they decided that she would never again be able to walk; and the poor Nan wept and sobbed for now she would never be able to find a husband.

Lily pitied Nan, and as she sorted the winter apples and put aside the medlars, or as she churned the butter and with her reddened hands wiped away the whey, she ever dreamed that some day Nan would be cured and all the while she did both her work and Nan's. Lily had completely forgotten her dream until one night as the snow beat heavily against the windows and the people in the cottage were drinking hot beer and eating toasted bread an old ballad-monger knocked upon the door. All the farm girls clustered about him for besides old ballades and songs of love he sold gloves and ribbons and sheer Holland linen and colored garters and hair pins and golden hair dresses.

—I have here, he monotonously incanted, the sad story of the wife of a usurer who during a twelvemonth was big with twenty sacks of gold écus and who had the curious and singular fancy of eating vipers' heads *à la fricassé* and roasted toads.

—Or I have, he continued, the ballade of the

great fish who on the fourteenth day of every April comes near to shore, leaps from the surface of the water a full forty fathoms into the air and then spews forth five bushels of wedding-rings all covered with verdigris by the sea.

—Or I have a song concerning the three wicked daughters of a king, which tells of the one who poured a gobletful of blood on the beard of her father.

—And I had also a song concerning the adventures of the good Queen Mandragora; but a knavish gust of wind blew the last page from my hands as I was making the turn just down the road.

At that moment Lily remembered her dream and she felt that by this token the queen Mandragora had ordered her to come.

That same night Lily put on her new shoes and after gently kissing Nan farewell she set off alone down the road. The old ballad-monger had already gone his way, and the last page of his song had blown so far afield that though Lily searched for it she could not find it; she did not know where the Queen Mandragora was nor how she should go about finding her.

No one of all the people she met could answer any of the questions she asked. She asked old laborers, who, when she passed, watched her far down the road and then rubbed their eyes wondering if she could be more than a vision which they had

seen. She asked young women about to be mothers who lolled indolently before their doorways gossiping with their neighbors. She pulled down the branches of mulberry bushes within the reach of little children and asked them if they had ever heard of the Queen Mandragora. Some answered: "There are no more queens!" Others replied: "There is no one by that name hereabouts; perhaps in olden times but not now." Still others said: "Is this the name of some young boy?" Once some evil lads conducted Lily to one of those houses which are closed by day but by night are lighted and open, and they told her that there lived Queen Mandragora, that she dressed in a scarlet gown and was served by nude women.

But Lily knew well that the true Queen Mandragora always dressed in green and never in red and that before finding her she must travel over a road of three colors. So she knew the deceit of the wicked children.

Lily walked for a very long time. She passed the better part of her life plodding along dusty white roads, floundering through mud and across deep ditches and sometimes she walked beside the large wagons taking produce to the city and talked to the wagoners, and sometimes in the evening under some brilliant sunset she walked beside towering hay ricks, and once while she talked with the farmer there hung from the piled hay above her and glis-

tened in the sunlight a scythe. But no one could ever tell Lily of the Queen Mandragora.

Finally that she might not forget so difficult a name Lily tied three knots in her girdle.

At noon one day after having walked toward the sun all morning she came upon a brown road which bordered a blue canal. And the canal followed the way of the road and between them there ran a green grass-covered mound. Clumps of thicket lined the canal and the road and as far as one could see there was nothing but swamp land and hanging over all a pale green mist. Here and there little hummocks lifted from the surrounding flat lands, and on each hummock was a little conical hut. Far away in a straight line the road lost itself in the flaming crimson of the setting sun.

Lily met a little boy beside the road. His eyes were narrow and aslant and he was pulling a heavy flat-bottomed boat up the canal. She wanted to ask him if he had ever seen the queen, but in terror she realized that she had forgotten the queen's name. She cried out in pain and wept and vainly fingered the knots in her girdle. She cried the more as she realized that she walked the road of the three colors, the dusty brown of the road, the blue of the canal and the green mound which ran between the two. Again she fingered the three knots she had tied in her girdle. The little boy, thinking that she suffered, but unable to understand her unhappiness,

plucked from the green border of the road a little flower and put it in her hand.

—This herb will heal all ills, he said. It is a mandrake but most people hereabouts call it the mandragora.

This is how Lily found her queen dressed in green leaves.

She clutched the herb to her as something precious and began her long way back again. And her return seemed much longer than her outward journey, for Lily was tired. It seemed to her that she had walked for many years, but she was happy in the knowledge that now she would be able to cure Nan.

She crossed the sea and the great terrifying emptiness of the waters, and at last she came to Devon ever holding the precious herb beneath her waist and tight against her bosom. She did not recognize the tree-lined pathway up to the house, and it seemed to her that everything was changed. In the great common room of the farmhouse she came upon an old woman surrounded by many little children. Lily asked for Nan. The old woman seemed surprised and looked closely at Lily for some moments before she spoke.

—Nan is married and left here a long, long time ago.

—She was cured then? asked Lily and there was a note of joy in her voice when she spoke.

—Yes, she was cured, said the old woman, and you, poor child, you are Lily?

As if in a daze Lily asked: How old is Nan now?

The children dancing about the old woman cried out: Nan is not quite as old as grandmother, she is only fifty.

Suddenly Lily seemed very tired, she smiled and the heavy pungent perfume of the mandrake she held seemed to overpower her. As if in a faint she slipped to the floor and a beam of sunlight played across her face. When the little children touched her she was dead.

So it was that Lily went to seek out the kingdom of Queen Mandragora and in the end was carried away by her.



M O N E L L E

MONELLE

THE APPARITION OF MONELLE

I DO NOT know how I came upon the strange stall which suddenly loomed up before me out of the night. I forget both the name of the city and the year: I remember only that the season was rainy, very rainy.

It was at this time that people found along the roads and highways little children, tiny vagabonds who refused to grow up. Little girls of seven years knelt and prayed that they might not grow older, for puberty seemed to them a sign of mortality. Under the livid sky they marched in ghostly white procession, and the weird shadows along the roads spoke in a half-voice to these child people. They desired only to live in perpetual ignorance. They longed only to devote themselves to the eternal playing of childhood. They despaired of the trials and labors of life; for them only the past existed.

In these sad days, in this rainy, very rainy season I came upon the tiny flickering lights of the little

lamp vender, pale and mysterious they were, like to the glitter of shooting stars.

I approached the shelter of the canvas awning above her stall, and as I lowered my head drops of rain ran down my neck.

And I said to her :

—Little merchant, what do you sell in this sad season of rain?

—Lamps, she replied, only lighted lamps.

—And tell me truly, I said to her, what are these little lighted lamps which stand no higher than one's little finger and which burn with a flame quite as small as a needle's end?

—These, she said, are the lamps of this sad and melancholy time. In times long past they were doll lamps, but the children no longer want to grow up, and that is why I sell them my little lamps which scarcely light the rainy darkness of these days.

—And do you live in this way, little merchant dressed in black, I asked, and do you eat by the silver that the children pay you for your lamps?

—Yes, she said simply, but I earn very little, for the rain often extinguishes my lamps as I hold them out to the children, and when the lamps are extinguished the children no longer want them; for they can not be relighted. I know well that I can find no more such lamps; there remain to me only these few and when they have been sold then we will all go to live in the deep shadows.

—And, I asked, are these then the only light in this sad season; and how can one illumine with such small lamps the deep and dark melancholy of all things?

—The rain often puts them out, she said, and in the fields and in the streets they can not be used. My lamps must be carefully guarded if they are to remain lighted. The children shelter them in the hollow of their hands and they lock themselves away. They lock themselves away, each with his lamp and a mirror, and the little lamps suffice to show each his image clearly in the mirror.

I looked upon the poor vacillating flames for some moments.

—Alas! I said. Little merchant, these lamps you sell give a sad light and the reflection they cast back in the mirrors must also be sad.

—They are not so sad, said the little child in black, as long as the images they reflect cease not to be children; but the little lamps that I sell are not eternal. Their tiny flames diminish as if they too were afflicted by the melancholy of these sad times, and when my little lamps go out and the children no longer see the glimmer of their reflections in the mirrors they despair, for they fear that they will not be able to know the instant that they grow up and are no longer children. That is why they flee lamenting into the night. For you see I can not sell more than one lamp to any child; if they try to buy another it will go out in their hands.

I reached toward the little merchant and I wished to take one of her lamps into my hands.

—Oh, you must not touch them, she said, for you have passed the age when my little lamps will burn. They are made only for dolls and for children. Do you not possess a grown person's lamp?

—Alas! I said, in this sad season of rain, in this dolorous and forgotten time only your lamps, the children's lamps, will burn and I wish, even I, to look once more upon my reflection in a mirror.

—Come, she replied, let us look together.

Up a rambling, time-worn stairway she led me into a small room. The walls were sealed with wood and in a far corner there hung a fragment of a broken mirror. Look closely, she said, and I will show you. My lamp is more powerful and brighter than those I sell. And she raised her little lamp to the mirror.

A pale light seemed to burn in the mirror's depth and I saw reflected there stories well known to me. But the little lamp lied! Oh, it lied! For I saw the plume brushed across the lips of Cordelia; and she smiled and was healed. With her old father she lived like a bird in a great cage, and she kissed his white beard. I saw Ophelia play upon the mirrored water of the pool and clasp about Hamlet's neck her damp arms engarlanded with violets. I saw Desdemona waken and stray under the willows. I saw the Princess Maleine raise her two hands to

the eyes of the old king and laugh and dance. I saw Melisande, freed, admiring her reflection in the fountain.

And I cried out:

—Deceitful little lamp. . . .

—Hush! said the little merchant of lamps as she placed her hands upon my lips. You must say nothing. Like this melancholy season, these are things which you can not understand.

* * * * *

Then I lowered my head and went through the rainy night into the unknown city.



THE LIFE OF MONELLE

I DO NOT know when Monelle took me by the hand. I think that it was on an autumn evening when the rain was already cold.

—Come play with us, she said.

Monelle carried in the gaping pocket of her pinafore one or two broken dolls and a shuttlecock, the feathers of which were tattered and frayed.

Her face was pale, but her eyes laughed.

—Come play, she said. We will work no more, we will only play.

There was a high wind and the gutters were filled with mud. The pavements glistened. From the awnings of the little stores the rain fell drop by drop. Several girls stood shivering before the doorway of a pastry shop. The lighted candles in the windows seemed red.

Monelle took from her pocket a little leaden thimble, a small pewter sword and a rubber ball.

—All these are for the children, she said. I go out each day to buy our provisions.

—What is your name and where do you live and how, my child?

—Monelle, said the little girl, grasping my hand. They call me Monelle, and our house is a house where one plays. We have done away with work, and the few little coins which we had have been given to me to buy cakes with. Every day I look for children in the streets and I tell them about our house and I take them there. We hide ourselves well so that no one will ever find us, for grown-up people force us to return to them and they take from us all the happiness that we have. But we, we want to stay together and play.

—And what games do you play, little Monelle?

—We play all the games. Those who are large play at pistols and guns; and the others play with a ball which is tied to a racquet, or they hold hands and dance round and round or they draw pretty pictures on the window-panes which one can never see, or blow soap bubbles while the others dress their dolls and take them for walks and we all count the fingers and the toes of the very little ones to make them laugh.

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The house to which Monelle led me appeared to have no windows opening upon the street, but on second glance I noticed that all its windows had been walled up. It seemed to back upon the street for all its light came from a deep garden. Already, I could hear happy voices.

Three children came running out to us.

—Monelle! Monelle! they cried. Monelle has come back to us!

Then they saw me and stopped and murmured together in low voices.

—How big he is! Will he play with us, Monelle?

And Monelle said to them:

—Soon all the grown-up people will come to us. They will come to the little children and they will learn to play. We will have a class to teach them and in our class no one will ever work. Are you hungry?

A multitude of childish voices answered her:

—Yes! Yes! Yes! We are hungry and it is time for supper.

Then they brought little round tables and some large napkins, almost as large as lilac leaves, and deep glasses, as deep as thimbles, and plates like walnut shells. Their supper was of chocolate and crumbs of sugar; the wine could not be poured into the goblets, because the necks of the little vials, almost as long as one's little finger, were too small.

The house was old and the rooms were high. On every side there burned green and rose-colored candles in minute pewter sconces. Upon the walls little round glasses gleamed, seeming like pieces of money changed into mirrors. The dolls seated between the children could be recognized only by their immobility; some sat in their chairs, arms raised,

tending their hair before little dressing-tables, while others had already been put in their little brass beds, the covers tucked in tightly just up to their chins. Fine green moss with which the children had matted their cradles was strewn about the room.

It seemed almost that this house was a prison or a hospital. A prison where one shuts up innocents to guard them from suffering, a hospital where were cured the ills of the pain and the labor of life. Monelle was at once jailer and nurse.

The little Monelle watched the children playing. She was very pale. Perhaps she was hungry.

—How do you and these children live, Monelle? I asked suddenly.

She replied simply:

—We live on nothing. . . . We do not know . . .

Then she began to laugh, but she was very feeble.

She sat on the foot of the bed of a child who was ill. She held to his lips a nursing bottle full of milk and for a long time remained motionless, her head lowered and her lips half open.

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Some of the children, hand in hand, were dancing round and round the room and singing gaily in their shrill voices. Monelle raised her hand and said:

—Hush!

And then speaking softly she said:

—I believe that I am ill, but you must not leave me. Play, here beside me. To-morrow some one else will go to find playthings for you. I will stay here and we will amuse ourselves without making any noise. Hush! Later we will play in the streets and in the fields, and we will be given pastries in all the shops. Until that time comes to be we must live like other people. We must wait and after we have waited we will play.

And Monelle said:

—Love me well for I love you all.

Then she seemed to sleep beside the sick child.

All the children regarded her closely.

A little trembling voice said feebly:

—Monelle is dead.

There followed a great silence.

After a while the children bore little lighted candles before her bed, and, thinking perhaps that she but slept, they ranged about her on the bed little toy pine-trees, cut from wood and painted light green and among the trees they arranged little toy sheep as if she were their shepherd. Then they all sat around in a circle and patiently waited for Monelle to waken. A few moments passed, and then the sick child, feeling the cheek of Monelle and finding it cold, began to cry.

THE FLIGHT OF MONELLE

THERE was once a child who used to play with Monelle. This was in the time before Monelle had gone away. Every hour of the day he passed beside her, looking deep into her eyes. For no reason at all save the sheer joy of it she would laugh and then he too would laugh. When she slept her half-open lips moved in the phrasing of gentle good words. When she woke she smiled to herself knowing that he would soon come.

It was not a real game that they played; for Monelle was obliged to work. She was so little and all day she sat before a dusty window, and beyond the dusty window there stretched as far as she could see an unbroken cement wall, cold in the dreary north light. The little fingers of Monelle busily stitched the linens which lay in her lap as if they were trotting on a road of white cloth, the pins in the material hanging at her knees marking the next posting stage. Her right hand was clinched together and like a little chariot it advanced leaving behind a furrowed hem. Stitch, stitch, stitch, the

darting steel tongue plunged and emerged again drawing behind it through its golden eye a long thread. And her left hand was lovely to see, because she softly caressed the clean new cloth and smoothed out all the wrinkles as if she were hemming in silence the fresh soft sheets of a sick person.

So the child watched Monelle and rejoiced in his happiness without speaking, for her work seemed to him but a game and the while she told him simple little things which did not always make sense. She laughed at the sunshine; she laughed at the rain; she laughed at the snow. She liked to be warm and she liked to be damp and she liked to be cold. If she had any money she laughed, thinking of a new dress to dance in. If for the moment she was poor and had no money she laughed, thinking of the large pot of beans which would be her provision for a full week. Having a few sous she dreamed of the other children she would make laugh, but when she had nothing she hid herself away in her hunger and poverty.

There were always children about her who watched her with great wide-open eyes. But she preferred most of all, the child who came to be with her all the hours of the day. Nevertheless, she went away and left him all alone. She never spoke to him of her departure although just before she went away she became more grave and silent. Afterward he remembered that she had

ceased to care for the little things which were about her: her little armchair, the silly painted animals which had been brought to her and all her toys and bright-colored chiffons. She seemed to dream, a finger across her lips, of other and more distant things.

She went away one evening in late December when the little child was not with her. Carrying in her hand her little flickering lamp she went away into the shadows and did not return. When the child arrived he could just see far down the street the glimmer of a small flame beaten upon by wild gusts of wind. That was all. He never saw Monelle again.

For a long time he wondered why she had gone away without saying anything. He thought that, perhaps, she did not wish him to be saddened by her sadness, and he persuaded himself that she had but gone to other children who also had need of her. With her little dying lamp she had gone to carry them succor, the succor of a laughing flame in the night. Perhaps she thought that she should not love him to the exclusion of all others, that she should go to other little unknown children and love them too. Perhaps the needle with its golden eye had carried its little chariot of flesh up to the end, the extreme end of the hem. Perhaps Monelle was wearied of the road of brown Holland cloth over which her hands ceaselessly traveled. Without doubt she only wished to play, to play eternally.

Perhaps at last she wanted to see what lay behind the great blank wall which faced her room, whose windows had so many years before been sealed and then cemented over. Perhaps she would come back.

He remembered the first day that he had seen her, her frail flamboyant innocence all shaken with laughter. And her eyes were eyes of water and her thoughts moved across them like the shadows of water reeds. There at the turning of the street he had seen her. She had laughed deeply and joyously and her happiness had rung through the street like the clear rhythmical singing of a crystal cup. It had been a winter evening and there had been a heavy mist rolling in from the river. Her little shop had been open just so. The night was no different from that other evening. The same shops, likely the same people, the voice of the city had not changed. Only the year was different and the expectation. He advanced with care; everything was the same, the same as that other night, save that now he was awaiting her. Was this not sufficient reason for her to come? And he held his frail hands out into the cold mists.

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This time Monelle did not come out of the shadows. No light laughter broke through the night. Monelle was far away and she remembered neither the evening nor the year. Yet perhaps—perhaps during the night she had slipped into the little uninhabited room next door and hidden there

to surprise him. The child walked on tiptoe so quietly in this game of hide-and-seek. But she was not there. She would come back—oh, yes!—she would come back. The other children had had enough happiness from her. It was his turn again. The child heard his own voice softly murmuring: “I have been good to-day!” His childish words were lost in the night, they faded like some ancient color, consumed already by the echoes of memory.

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The child seated himself patiently. There, before him, was the little wicker armchair still bearing the slight imprint of her body, the low table she loved, the little mirror, more cherished because it was broken and, seeming to call to Monelle, the last unfinished piece of linen lay stretched out awaiting its mistress.

All the things in the room awaited her return. Her work table remained expectantly open. A green end of tape pierced with a little ring hung from the rolled-up measure. Some crumpled cloth raised itself into little white hills. A row of needles rose behind like to an ambush of lances. The little iron thimble was a halbert discarded on the field of battle. The scissors, their jaws indolently open, were like some steel dragon. So everything in this little room waited for Monelle. But the supple, agile hands no longer moved there, holding out to this enchanted world their childish warmth. All this

strange little castle of work slept. Only the child hoped. The door would open softly; the little laughing flame would flutter; the little white hills of cloth would smooth themselves out; the halbert would refind and cover its rose-headed finger; the little steel dragon would close its jaws and under the pressure of tiny hands snip through white material. The chariot of flesh would hover over them all and a tired child's voice would say again: "I have been good to-day!"

Can it be that miracles never happen twice?



THE PATIENCE OF MONELLE

I CAME upon a hidden refuge very narrow and dark and perfumed with a heavy odor, the sad haunting odor of crushed violets, and there was no way to escape from this place which was like to a long passage. Reaching out about me I touched a woman's body huddled up in sleep; my fingers passed through her long hair. My hand brushed over a face that I knew, and it seemed to me that her eyes fluttered and her lips pressed under my fingers and I knew that I had found Monelle again and that she slept alone in this dark place.

I cried aloud in surprise, and I said to her, for she neither laughed nor wept:

—Oh! Monelle! Why have you come to sleep here, far from us, like a patient little field mouse in an empty furrow?

Her eyes widened and her lips half opened as they did long ago when she did not comprehend and sought the understanding of those whom she loved.

—Oh, Monelle, I said, all the children weep in their great empty house and the toys are covered with dust and the little lamps have gone out, and

the childish laughter which used to echo from every corner is no more and every one has returned to labor and work. We have thought of you, Monelle. We have thought that you played far from us, in some place where we could not go, but here you sleep like some wild thing of the fields, nested down below the snow which you once loved for its whiteness.

Then she spoke, and it is strange but her voice had not changed in this hidden place, and I could not keep myself from weeping and she dried away my tears with her hair.

—Oh, my dear one, she said, you must not weep; for you have need of your eyes for work since the world must live to work and the time for playing has not yet come. You must not stay here in this cold and hidden place.

Through my deep sobs I said to her:

—Oh, Monelle, you used to fear the cold as the hand of a dead person.

—I no longer fear the cold, she said.

—You are all alone here, all alone; when you were a child you used to fear being left alone.

—I am no longer alone, she said, for I wait.

—Oh, Monelle, what are you waiting for, curled up and sleeping here in this hidden place?

—I do not know, she said, but I wait and I am not alone, for the expectation of that which I await keeps me company.

Then I perceived that her face was filled with some great hope.

—My beloved, you must not remain here, she said, here in this cold and hidden place; go back to your friends and to life.

—Do you not wish to guide me and teach me, Monelle, that I also may have the patience to wait for that which you wait? I am so lonely!

—Oh, my beloved, she said, I am still too unskilful and too awkward to teach you as I was before when you yourself said that I was only a gentle little animal. These are things which you will surely discover in long and laborious reflection; these things which have suddenly come to me while I slept.

—Have you slept here, Monelle, without any memory of your past life, or do you still remember us?

—How could I, my loved one, forget you? For you are part of that which I await and against the finding of which I sleep; but I can not explain all this to you. Do you remember how much I always loved the earth, and how I dug up flowers to replant them; do you remember how often I said: "If I were a little bird then you could put me in your pocket when you must go away?" Oh, my beloved, I am here in this good earth, here like a black seed, and I wait the time when I may be a little bird.

—Oh, Monelle, you but sleep before flying very far away from us?

—No, my dear one, I do not know if I will fly; for I know nothing. But I am enveloped in this earth that I once so loved and I sleep against the coming of that which I await. Before sleeping, I was as you said, only a gentle little animal—I was no more than a little naked earthworm. Do you remember how together one day we found a little cocoon, silky and white? There was no hole piercing it and, wicked one, you opened it, and it was empty. Do you think that the little winged thing whose house it was had not gone out of it? Yes, but no one knows how! It had slept a long time. And before sleeping it had been a little naked worm; and the little worms are blind. Pretend then, my loved one (this is not true but I have often thought it to be so), that I have woven my little cocoon from the things that I loved, the earth, toys, flowers, children, and childish little rhymes, and my memory of you, dear one. So it is that to me this nest is white and silky and it does not seem cold or hidden, but this is perhaps not so for others. I know well that it will not open at all, that it will remain closed like the cocoon we found so long ago. However, the day will come when I shall no longer be here, my beloved. For that which I wait for is to go from this nest as the little winged moth went from its cocoon; nor you nor I can know how this will come to be. I

do not know when I wish all this to come to pass; but that is what I am waiting for. Also I wait for the children and you, my love, and the day which will come when no one will ever work again in this world; these too, I await. I am still only a gentle little animal, my loved one; for I can not, and know not how better to, explain these things to you.

—Monelle, you must, you must come away with me from this hidden place, I said; for I know that you do not think these things; that you have hidden yourself away here to weep. Now that I have found you at last, all alone, sleeping here all alone, waiting here, come with me; come with me out of this dark and hidden place.

And Monelle said:

—I can not go with you, my beloved, for this shell that I have woven about myself is all closed and so it is that I can not go out of it; and you, you must not remain here for you would suffer too deeply.

Then Monelle put her arms about me and her kiss, it is strange, was like to those other kisses she once gave me, and that was why I wept again and she dried away my tears with her hair.

—You must not weep, she said. You must not grieve for me during my time of waiting; perhaps I will not have long to wait. Be not then desolated, for I bless you for having helped me to sleep in my little nest, of which the best white silk was made by you.

As in the past when she slept, Monelle curled herself up as if against some invisible body and murmured to me: "I sleep, my beloved."

So I found her; but how will I be sure to find her again in that narrow and hidden place.



THE KINGDOM OF MONELLE

I READ one night, but while my finger followed the words and the lines my thoughts were far away. About me there fell a black rain, oblique and obscure. And the light of my lamp played upon the cold cinders on the hearth. And my mouth was filled with the taste of contamination and shame; for the world seemed to me hidden and my sight was clouded. Three times I called out:

—Let me have filthy water that I may quench my thirst for infamy.

Then I heard a voice which I remembered, and I saw a face and it was not unknown to me. And these were the words I heard:

—A White Kingdom! A White Kingdom! I know a White Kingdom!

I turned my head and I said to her without surprise:

—Little deceiving head, little false mouth, there are no longer kings or kingdoms. I vainly long for a Red Kingdom: but the time has passed. This kingdom is black, and moreover it is no king-

dom, for a multitude of shadowy kings wave their arms here. There is nowhere in the world a White Kingdom or a White King.

But she spoke again these words:

—A White Kingdom! A White Kingdom!
I know a White Kingdom!

And I tried to seize her hand but she eluded me.

—Neither by sadness nor by violence, she said. Nevertheless there is a White Kingdom. Pay heed . . . and come to me in the spirit of my Words.

She stood silent for a moment; and I remembered. . . .

—Nor by memory, she said. Pay heed . . . and come to me in the spirit of my Words.

She stood silent for a moment; and I began to think. . . .

—Nor by thought, she said. Pay heed . . . and come to me in the spirit of my Words.

And she stood silent for a moment.

Then I destroyed within me the sadness of my memory and the desire of my violence and all that I knew disappeared from my mind. And I waited in expectation.

—Now, she said, you will see the kingdom, but I do not know if you will enter into it. For I am difficult to understand save to those who understand nothing; and I am difficult to perceive save to those

who perceive nothing; and I am difficult to recognize save to those who have no memory. For you see I am here with you yet I am not here; you possess me yet you do not possess me.

I was filled with expectation and I listened.

But I heard nothing and then she bowed her head and said to me:

—You regret your violence and your memory, but you have not achieved the complete destruction of them. You must destroy before you may attain the White Kingdom. Confess and you shall be saved; give unto my hands your violence and your memory and I will destroy them; for all confession is destruction.

And I cried out:

—I will tell you all, yes, I will tell you all. And you will hear me and you will destroy all that I have told you, for I am not strong enough.

—I have longed for a Red Kingdom where there were blood-covered kings who ever sharpened their swords; where upon opium-laden junks women with deep black eyes wept; where pirates buried in the sandy beaches of desert islands their coffers heavy with gold ingots; where all the prostitutes were free; where highwaymen harried the roads in ghostly dawns; where young girls gave themselves to greed and luxury; where a company of embalmers gilded bodies in blue nights; where children yearned for unknown loves and forgotten murders; where

naked bodies were strewn about the flagstones of oppressive sweating rooms; where all things were rubbed with ardent spices and lighted by red candles. But this kingdom is hidden beneath the earth and I but awakened in the midst of a deep gloom.

—Then I have had a Black Kingdom which is not a kingdom: for it was filled with kings who only believed themselves kings and who sullied their own works and their commandments. And a somber rain fell there day and night. And I wandered a long time by the roads, following the tiny trembling glitter of a lamp which appeared to me from the very depths of the night. My head was drenched with rain and my eyes were misted but, nevertheless, I saw this lamp. The one who ruled there called herself Monelle, and together we two played in this Black Kingdom. But one evening the little lamp was extinguished and Monelle fled. I searched for her a long time in the shadows, but I could not find her. This evening I searched for her in books, but I searched for her in vain. I am lost in this Black Kingdom. I can not forget the little light of Monelle, and I have in my mouth a taste of infamy.

As soon as I had spoken I felt that destruction was complete within me, and that which I awaited was in part revealed to me, and from the shadows I heard her voice say:

—Forget all things and all things will be given to you. Forget Monelle and she will be given to you. This is the new philosophy. Be as the very young dog whose eyes are not yet open but which gropes to nuzzle his cold nose in some warm place.

And she who spoke to me cried out:

—A White Kingdom! A White Kingdom! I know a White Kingdom!

And forgetfulness penetrated within me and in place of my intelligence was deep purity.

And she who spoke to me cried out again:

—A White Kingdom! A White Kingdom! I know a White Kingdom! Here is the key to the kingdom: in the Red Kingdom is a Black Kingdom; in the Black Kingdom is a White Kingdom; in the White Kingdom . . .

—Monelle, I cried, Monelle! In the White Kingdom is Monelle!

And the Kingdom appeared; but it was walled in whiteness.

Then I asked;

—And where is the key to this Kingdom?

But she who had spoken to me remained silent.



THE RESURRECTION OF MONELLE

LOUVETTE led me down a green path to the border of the field. Just beyond, the ground rose abruptly and at the horizon a brown line cut the sky. Flaming clouds hung over the setting sun, and in the uncertain light of early evening I distinguished little errant shadows.

—Soon, she said, we will see the fire lighted. To-morrow it will be still farther away, for they stay no place long nor do they ever light a fire twice in the same spot.

—Who are they? I asked Louvette.

—No one knows. They are the children dressed in white. Some of them have come from our villages, others have walked here from far-away countries.

Presently we saw a little flame which danced on the hilltop.

—That is their fire, said Louvette. Now we shall find them, for they stay the night where they have built their fire; in the morning they will go on to some place else.

When we came to the crest of the hill where shone the flame we perceived many children dressed in white standing before a fire.

Among them, seeming to speak to them and to guide them, I recognized the little vender of lamps whom I had met long before in the dark and rainy city.

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She raised herself from among the children and said to me :

—I no longer sell the little deceiving lamps, which go out in the rain.

—For the time has come when illusion has taken the place of truth, when work has perished from the world.

—Once we played in the house of Monelle ; but the lamps were only toys and the house but a refuge.

—Monelle is dead ; *I am Monelle*, and I rose up in the night and the little children came to me.

She turned toward Louvette.

—Come with us, she said, and be happy in our land of illusion.

And Louvette ran into the midst of the children and, like them, became dressed in white.

—As we go through the world, said she who was the little lamp vender, we deceive all those who come to us and in the end we give them joy.

—Once our toys were things of illusion, but now the real things have become our toys.

—With us there is no suffering and there is no death; we say that those who know suffering and death are but striving to know sad truths which are not real and which do not exist. Those who wish to know truth and reality stray from us and we abandon them.

—We have no faith in the realities of the world, for they but lead to sadness.

—We want to lead these children toward joy.

—Grown-up people might come to us, if they would, and we would teach them our ignorance and illusions.

—We would show them the little flowers in the fields; such flowers as they have never seen before, for each flower is different from all other flowers.

We marvel at all the countries that we see; for no land is like to any other land.

—There are no resemblances in this world, and for us there are no memories.

—All things change without end and we have accustomed ourselves to change.

—That is why we light a fire each evening in a different place; and about the fire we invent for the pleasure of the moment stories about the pigmies and the little living dolls.

—When the flames die down still another illusion seizes us and we are happy, for all illusions and especially new illusions please us.

—And in the morning, when the day comes

again, we no longer remember the illusions of yesterday.

—So we wander through many lands, and the children come to us in great numbers and those who follow us become happy.

—That we should remain in the city those others, the older people, have set us to work, and though we love them work wearies us and to see those we love suffer and die makes us unhappy.

—Our error was to stop ourselves in life and, remaining immobile, to regard all things flow by us, instead of trying to stop life and to make of ourselves an eternal resting-place among the floating ruins.

—But the little deceiving lamps lighted for us the way to happiness.

—Men seek their joy in memory, they resist the living of life and take pride in the verities of the world, which having become verities are no longer true.

—They afflict themselves with death, which is only the image of their own science and their own immutable laws.

—They grieve at having poorly selected in the future, ends which they have chosen with past desires and calculated in the light of past truths.

—For us, all desire is new and we desire only deceitful moments; all memory is truth and we have renounced the knowledge of truth.

—We regard work as deadly for it stops our lives and makes of our lives something kin to work.

—All habitude is to us pernicious for it obstructs us when we would give ourselves entirely to new illusions.

These were the words of her who guided the little children.

I begged Louvette to return with me to her parents; but deep in her eyes I saw clearly that she no longer recognized me.

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All through that night I lived in a realm of dreams and illusions and I tried to learn of the ignorance, the illusion and the wonderment of a child new born.

When the little dancing flames died down I perceived, in the sad night, some candid children who wept, having not yet lost their memory.

Others were suddenly seized by a frenzy of work and they cut ears of corn from the green stalks which grew near by and laid them in bundles in the shadows.

Still others, wishing to know truth, turned their little faces toward the cold ashes of the fire and, shivering, died in their white robes.

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When the first light of the new day tinged the eastern sky she who led the children rose and heeding neither me nor those who had wished to

know the truth she began her way again and many of the children dressed in white rose and followed her.

Theirs was a joyous band and they laughed sweetly at all things.

When the next evening came upon them they built anew their straw pyre, and again the flames died down and toward the middle of the night the ashes became cold.

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Then Louvette gave heed. She preferred to love and to suffer, and so she came to me in her white robes and together we fled across the fields.



